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THE PICTURE SHAKESPEARE

MERCHANT OF VENICE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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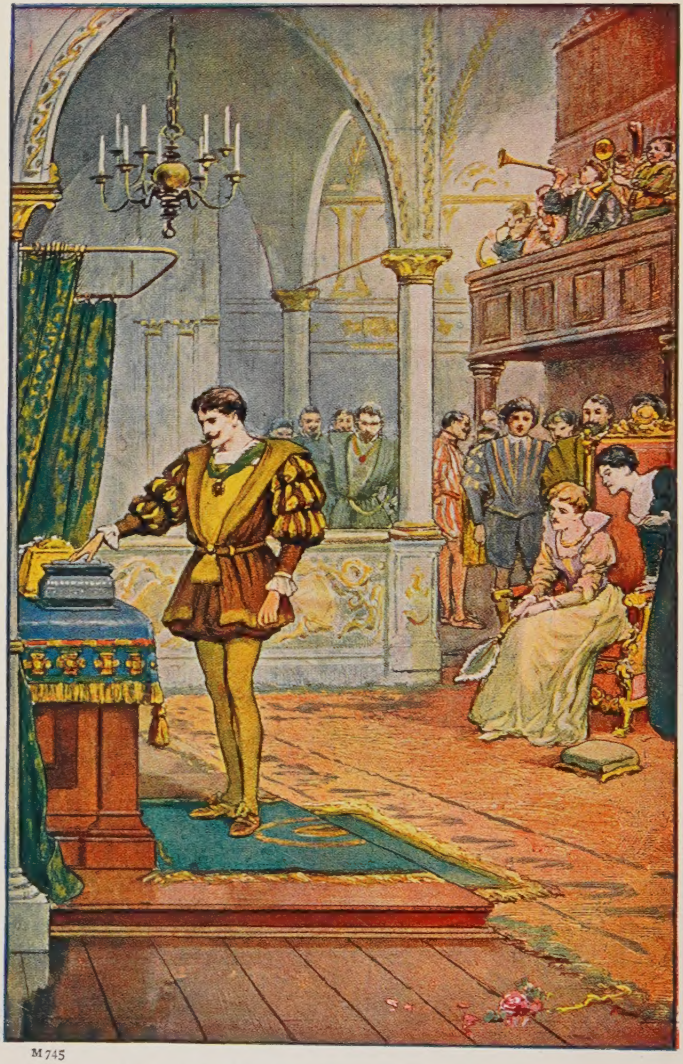

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Bassanio. And here choose I:—joy be the consequence!

(*Act III, Scene 2.*)

THE PICTURE SHAKESPEARE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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The Notes and Appendices in this edition are substantially those of the Junior School Shakespeare. For the purpose of this edition both texts and notes have been revised by practical teachers, in order to secure entire suitability for class use, and particularly for the needs of those reading for the College of Preceptors or Junior Local Examinations. The following are the names of those who have performed this work of revision:—

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INTRODUCTION

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

Antonio, a rich Venetian merchant, has ventured all his wealth in a fleet of ships which have sailed on trading voyages into all parts of the world. A settled sadness which he cannot account for seems to give an omen of failure. Just at this time, when he can little afford it, his friend Bassanio begs of him a loan of 3000 ducats, in order that he may have the means necessary to make a presentable appearance as suitor for the hand of Portia, a rich heiress, who lives on an estate called Belmont. Antonio, unable to lend the money, but unwilling not to help his friend, borrows the money from Shylock, a rich money-lending Jew. Shylock, at first feigning unwillingness to lend, and breaking out into bitter reproach against Antonio for the scorn and contempt with which he has treated him, at last consents, on one condition, proposed, as he says, "in a merry sport"—that Antonio shall sign a bond agreeing to lose a pound of flesh if the money is not repaid within three months. Shylock declares that these are easy terms on which to borrow, and Antonio, thinking himself fortunate in not having to pay a monstrous interest, agrees to them, in spite of misgiving on the part of his friend. The Jew's real hope is that Antonio will fail to pay, and that he will himself be able, by taking his pound of flesh and so killing Antonio, to have revenge for the opposition which the Christian merchant has raised against him in

Venice. With the money thus obtained Bassanio makes his preparations. He takes into his service Launcelot Gobbo, a roguish clown who has left the service of Shylock, and sets off for Belmont, accompanied by his friend Gratiano, who has just assisted another friend, Lorenzo, in running away with Jessica, the Jew's daughter.

Meanwhile, at Belmont, several high-born suitors have been endeavouring to win Portia as their wife. By her father's will, the man she is to marry is he who, from three caskets, of gold, silver, and lead, shall choose the one in which her portrait is placed. She has talked over the qualities of the various gentlemen with Nerissa, her maid, and finds none of them to her liking; indeed, the only one for whom she has a good word is Bassanio, whom she had once seen when he visited the house in her father's lifetime among the retinue of a Venetian nobleman. The Princes of Morocco and Arragon having made their choice unsuccessfully, Bassanio arrives, and Portia, letting him see by many a word and look how interested she is in him, awaits with anxiety the choice he will make. He passes by the caskets of gold and silver, and chooses the leaden one, which contains the portrait. So he and Portia are happily betrothed.

At this moment Lorenzo and Jessica arrive, with Salerio, who brings Bassanio a letter from Antonio. It appears that Shylock has been in a fury at the flight of his daughter, who took away with her a large sum of money and a valuable jewel, and has grown more and more embittered against Antonio. And now the opportunity has come for his revenge, for Antonio's ships are reported lost, and the time is drawing near for the repayment of the debt. Antonio, fearing that his life will soon be ended, begs Bassanio to come and see him before his death. Bassanio is much troubled by the letter, and Portia, as soon as she knows the facts, tells him that he must at once return to Venice, and carry money with him to satisfy

the Jew. Accordingly, he waits only for the marriage ceremony, and then with Gratiano sets off for Venice.

On his arrival, his first endeavour is to get Shylock to accept the money; but the day is past, and the Jew will have nothing but his bond. The case comes into court before the duke. Again the Jew is offered his money, doubled, but again he refuses to accept it, declaring that if the terms of the bond are not carried out, the boasted justice of the state of Venice is a sham. The duke is about to postpone the case until the arrival of a "learned doctor of the law", Bellario, whom he has sent for, when a lawyer's clerk enters, bearing a letter from Bellario, who, too sick to come himself, introduces a learned young man as his substitute. The "learned young man" is Portia in disguise. When her husband had left Belmont, she had gone off at once with Nerissa to see Bellario at Padua; and, primed with some legal instruction from him, she was now come to save her husband's friend.

Assuring Shylock at first that the law is on his side, she fans his vengeful spirit, so that he refuses thrice his money, and whets his knife to hack at Antonio's bared bosom. But Portia bids him stay. He may take his pound of flesh, she tells him, but must not shed one drop of blood, or all his goods are forfeited to the state. Shylock will now accept three times his money, but Portia insists on the fulfilment of his bond, warning him that if he cuts more or less than an exact pound, he must lose all his goods and be put to death. Portia relentlessly proceeds to show that an attempt having obviously been made against the life of a citizen, one-half of Shylock's goods goes by law to the injured man, the other half to the state, and his life itself is at the mercy of the duke. But the duke is merciful; he does not demand Shylock's life, and at Antonio's request allows the Jew to keep half his property, on condition that he gives up to Antonio the other half in trust for his daughter's husband after his

death, that he at once becomes a Christian, and that he makes a will in favour of his daughter and son-in-law. Shylock, utterly broken down, accepts these terms, and hurries from the court.

The play closes with a beautiful moonlight scene at Belmont, where Lorenzo and Jessica welcome home Portia and Nerissa, who are soon followed by their husbands and Antonio. Little entanglements are unravelled, explanations are made, and the play ends quietly and happily just as day is breaking.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE DUKE OF VENICE.

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, } suitors to Portia.
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, }

ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice.

BASSANIO, his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.

SALANIO, }
SALARINO, } friends to Antonio and Bassanio.
GRATIANO, }

LORENZO, in love with Jessica.

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.

TUBAL, a Jew, his friend.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock.

OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot.

LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio.

BALTHASAR, } servants to Portia.
STEPHANO, }

PORTIA, a rich heiress.

NERISSA, her waiting-maid.

JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

SCENE. *Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the seat of Portia, on the Continent.*

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

Scene 1. *Venice. A street*

Enter Antonio, Salarino, *and* Salanio

Ant. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 't is made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;
And every object that might make me fear

Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.
Salar. My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.
Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.
Salar. Why, then you are in love.
Ant. Fie, fie!
Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry: and 't were as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,

And other of such vinegar aspect
That they 'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO

Salan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.
Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.
Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it, your own business calls on you
And you embrace the occasion to depart.
Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.
Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?
Salar. We 'll make our leisures to attend on yours.
[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio*
Lor. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you: but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.
Bass. I will not fail you.
Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care:
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.
Ant. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.
Gra. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks—
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say 'I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!'
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lor. Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gra. Well, keep me company but two years moe,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Ant. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.

Gra. Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried.

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo*

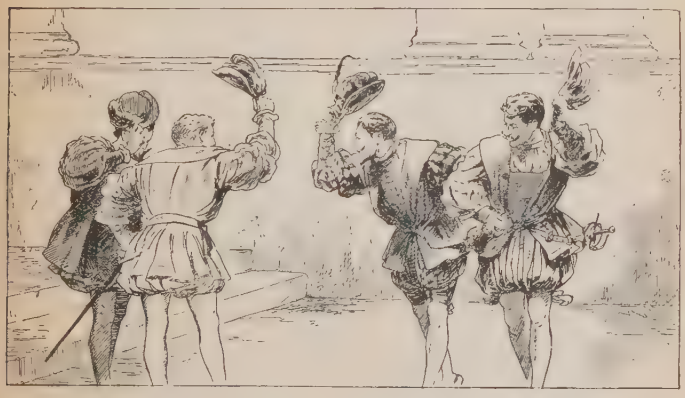
Ant. Is that any thing now?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are

as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

Ant. Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

Bass. 'T is not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,



Gra. Fare ye well awhile:
I 'll end my exhortation after dinner.—(Act i. 1. 103, 104.)

By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time something too prodigal
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Ant. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;

And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way with more advised watch,
To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both
Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Ant. You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost
Than if you had made waste of all I have:
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,

And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake. [*Exeunt*

Scene 2. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Enter Portia *and* Nerissa

Por. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Por. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper

leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed

Por. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?—(Act i. 2. 25, 26.)

by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou

namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'If you will not have me, choose': he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man; if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

Ner. What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly

he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour every where.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.

Ner. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast: an the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I 'll be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them

but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

Ner. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so called.

Ner. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Por. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-man

How now! what news?

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt*

Scene 3. *Venice. A public place*

Enter Bassanio *and* Shylock

Shy. Three thousand ducats; well.

Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shy For three months; well.

Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shy. Antonio shall become bound: well.

Bass. May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?

Shy. Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good man.

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shy. O, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats: I think I may take his bond.

Bass. Be assured you may.

Shy. I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

Shy. [*Aside*] How like a fawning publican he looks!

I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

Bass. Shylock, do you hear?

Shy. I am debating of my present store,
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

Ant. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
How much ye would?

Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Ant. And for three months.

Shy. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you;
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.

Ant. I do never use it.

Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep—
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third—

Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?
Shy. No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streaked and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire,
The skilful shepherd pilled me certain wands
And stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time
Fall party-coloured lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.
Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.
Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!
Shy. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate—
Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?
Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my money and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.

You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
'Shylock, we would have moneys': you say so;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this;
'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys'?
Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.
Shy. Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
This is kind I offer.
Bass. This were kindness.
Shy. This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there

Shy. Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this?—(Act i. 3. 117–119.)

Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.
Ant. Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.
Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.
Ant. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.
Shy. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this;
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.
Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.
Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you.
Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit Shylock*
The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.
Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

Ant. Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.

[*Exeunt*

ACT II

Scene I. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco *and his train;* Portia, Nerissa, *and others attending*

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear
The best regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But if my father had not scanted me
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets

To try my fortune. By this scimitar:
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Por. You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

Mor. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

Por. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.

[*Cornets, and exeunt*

Scene 2. *Venice. A street*

Enter Launcelot

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me saying to me 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot', or 'good Gobbo', or 'good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away'. My conscience says 'No; take heed, honest Launcelot;

take heed, honest Gobbo', or, as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels'. Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind', says the fiend, 'and run'. Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son', or rather an honest woman's son; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste; well, my conscience says 'Launcelot, budge not'. 'Budge', says the fiend. 'Budge not', says my conscience. 'Conscience', say I, 'you counsel well'; 'Fiend', say I, 'you counsel well': to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

Enter Old GOBBO, *with a basket*

Gob. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. [*Aside*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob By God's sonties, 't will be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside*] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters.—Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. No master, sir, but a poor man's son; his father,

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left.—(Act ii. 2. 37, 38.)

though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.

Laun. Well, let his father be what a' will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. Of Launcelot, an 't please your mastership.

Laun. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed

deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman: but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

Laun. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou

and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

Laun. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, *with* LEONARDO *and other followers*

Bass. You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

[*Exit a Servant*

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify—

Gob. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve,—

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify—

Gob. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins—

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you—

Gob. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

Bass. One speak for both. What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows': see it done.

Laun. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I have ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing! eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed; here are simple scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo*

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:
These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,

Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee, go.
Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO

Gra. Where is your master?
Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [*Exit*
Gra. Signior Bassanio!
Bass. Gratiano!
Gra. I have a suit to you.
Bass. You have obtain'd it.
Gra. You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.
Bass. Why then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
But where thou art not known, why, there they show
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour
I be misconstrued in the place I go to
And lose my hopes.
Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say 'amen',
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.
Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.
Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.
Gra. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt*

SCENE 3. *The same. A room in Shylock's house*

Enter JESSICA *and* LAUNCELOT

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.
Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! But, adieu: these foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit: adieu.
Jes. Farewell, good Launcelot. [*Exit Launcelot*
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife. [*Exit*

SCENE 4. *The same. A street*

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO

Lor. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.

Gra. We have not made good preparation.
Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Jes. And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.—(Act ii. 3. 8, 9.)

Salan. 'T is vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.
Lor. 'T is now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, *with a letter*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.

Lor. I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her; speak it privately.
Go.—Gentlemen, [*Exit Launcelot*
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

Salar. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

Salan. And so will I.

Lor. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'Tis good we do so.

[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio*

Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lor. I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt*

SCENE 5. *The same. Before Shylock's house*

Enter SHYLOCK *and* LAUNCELOT

Shy. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio:
What, Jessica!—thou shalt not gormandise,
As thou hast done with me:—What, Jessica!—
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out;—
Why, Jessica, I say!

Laun. Why, Jessica!

Shy. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Laun. Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter JESSICA

Jes. Call you? what is your will?

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. I am right loath to go:
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.

Shy. So do I his.

Laun. And they have conspired together, I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

Shy. What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:

Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
Say I will come.

Laun. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window, for all this;

There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*Exit*

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

Jes. His words were 'Farewell mistress'; nothing else.

Shy. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me;
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in:
Perhaps I will return immediately:
Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
Fast bind, fast find;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [*Exit*

Jes. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [*Exit*

Scene 6. *The same*

Enter Gratiano *and* Salarino, *masqued*

Gra. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

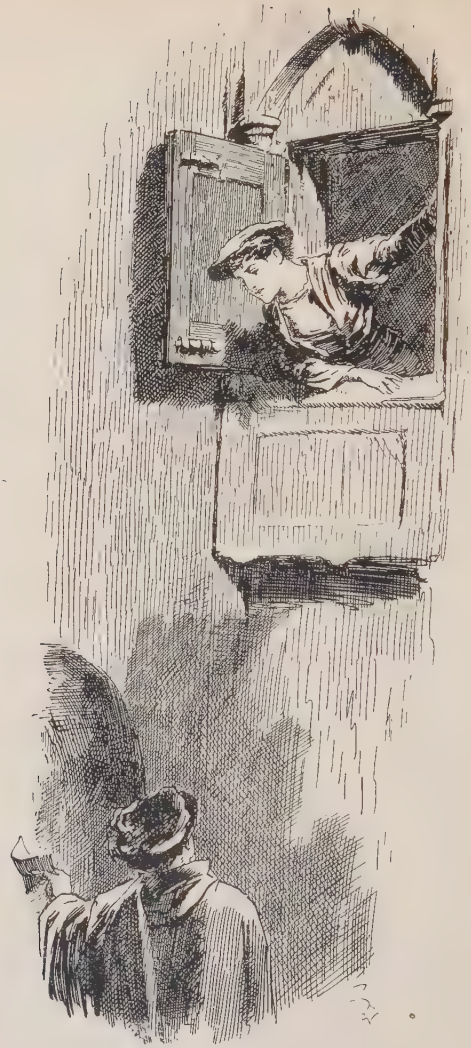
Salar. His hour is almost past.
Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.
Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!
Gra. That ever holds: who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.
How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced by the wanton wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent and beggar'd by the wanton wind!
Salar. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, *above, in boy's clothes*

Jes. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.
Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.
Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?
Lor. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.



Jes. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I 'll swear that I do know your tongue.—(Act ii. 6. 26, 27.)

Jes. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 't is night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.
Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.
Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
Why, 't is an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.
Lor. So are you, sweet.
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.
Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.
[*Exit above*
Gra. Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.
Lor. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath proved herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA, *below*

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.
[*Exit with Jessica and Salarino*

Enter ANTONIO

Ant. Who's there?
Gra. Signior Antonio!

Ant. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'T is nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night: the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go aboard:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.
Gra. I am glad on 't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt*

Scene 7. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Flourish of cornets. Enter Portia, *with the* Prince of Morocco, *and their trains*

Por. Go, draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.
Mor. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire';
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves';
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath'.
How shall I know if I do choose the right?
Por. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.
Mor. Some god direct my judgement! Let me see;
I will survey the inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I 'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,

And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:

Mor. Some god direct my judgement!—(Act ii. 7. 13.)

And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,

In graces and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold;
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire'.
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint:
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'T were damnation
To think so base a thought: it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

Por. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket*

Mor. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads*] All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold

But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
Fare you well; your suit is cold.

Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!

Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

[*Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets*

Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt*

Scene 8. *Venice. A street*

Enter Salarino *and* Salanio

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

Salan. The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
But there the duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
Besides, Antonio certified the duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!

And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.'
Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.
Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.
Salar. Marry, well remember'd.
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country richly fraught:
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.
Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.
Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so;
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love:
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there':
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.
Salan. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.
Salar. Do we so. [*Exeunt*

SCENE 9. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Enter NERISSA *with a* Servitor

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight:
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, *and their trains*

Por. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.
Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 't was I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage:
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.
Por. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.
Ar. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire'.
What many men desire! that 'many' may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,

Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house:
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves'.
I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket*

Por. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Ar. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.'
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
And of opposed natures.

Ar. What is here?

[*Reads*] The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgement is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss:
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.
I will ever be your head:
So be gone: you are sped.

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here:
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt Arragon and train*

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant

Serv. Where is my lady?

Por. Here: what would my lord?

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.
Ner. Bassanio lord Love, if thy will it be! [*Exeunt*

ACT III

Scene I. *Venice. A street*

Enter Salanio *and* Salarino

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio,—O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—

Salar. Come, the full stop.

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Salan. Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

Salan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian

is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant

Serv. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter Tubal

Salan. Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt Salanio, Salarino, and Servant*

Shy. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

Tub. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what 's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,—

Shy. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tub. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shy. I thank God, I thank God. Is 't true, is 't true?

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort!—(Act iii. 1. 75, 76.

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shy. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats!

Shy. Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shy. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

Tub. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [*Exeunt*

Scene 2. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, *and Attendants*

Por. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well,—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,—
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;
So will I never be: so may you miss me;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlook'd me and divided me;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,

Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long; but 't is to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.
Bass. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.
Por. Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.
Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.
Por. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak anything.
Bass. Promise me life, and I 'll confess the truth.
Por. Well then, confess and live.
Bass. 'Confess' and 'love'
Had been the very sum of my confession:
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.
Por. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music: that the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crowned monarch: such it is

As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence, but with much more love,
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

Music, whilst BASSANIO *comments on the caskets to himself*

SONG

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell:
I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bas. So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?

There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;
And these assume but valour's excrement
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:
So are those crisped snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

Por. [*Aside*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

Bass. What find I here?

[*Opening the leaden casket*

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes,—
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here 's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.
[*Reads*] You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair and choose as true!
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss.
A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am: though for myself alone

I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich;
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account; but the full sum of me
Is sum of something, which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier then in this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants and this same myself
Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!
Gra. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.
Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.
Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.
Por. Is this true, Nerissa?
Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.
Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?
Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.
Bass. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.
Gra. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salanio?

Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, *and* Salanio, *a Messenger from Venice*

Bass. Lorenzo and Salanio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here

Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.
Por. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.
Lor. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salanio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.
Salan. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signor Antonio
Commends him to you. [*Gives Bassanio a letter*
Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.
Salan. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.
Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salanio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.
Salan. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.
Por. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.
Bass. O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words

That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman;

Por. With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.—(Act iii. 2. 244–246.)

And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,

To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salanio?
Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary and India?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

Salan. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man:
He plies the duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
The duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

Jes. When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
If law, authority and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

Por. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Por. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bass. For me three thousand ducats.
Por. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [*Reads*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I. If I might but see you at my death—notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Por. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!
Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste: but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt*

Scene 3. *Venice. A street*

Enter Shylock, Salarino, Antonio, *and* Gaoler

Shy. Gaoler, look to him: tell not me of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
Gaoler, look to him.

Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.
Shy. I 'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs!
The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.
Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.
Shy. I 'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I 'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I 'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I 'll have no speaking: I will have my bond. [*Exit*
Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.
Ant. Let him alone:
I 'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.
Salar. I am sure the duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.
Ant. The duke cannot deny the course of law,
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice. If it be denied,
'T will much impeach the justice of his state:
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! [*Exeunt*

Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.—(Act iii. 3. 18, 19.)

Scene 4. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, *and* Balthasar

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.
Por. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestow'd
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery!
This comes too near the praising of myself;
Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return:
There is a monastery two miles off;

And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition;
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.
Lor. Madam, with all my heart;
I shall obey you in all fair commands.
Por. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
And so farewell, till we shall meet again.
Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!
Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.
Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica.
[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo*
Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua: see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the traject, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.
Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.
[*Exit*
Por. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.
Ner. Shall they see us?
Por. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,

When we are both accoutred like young men,
I 'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,

Por. I 'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I 'll prove the prettier fellow of the two.—(Act iii. 4. 62–64.)

And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy

With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
I could not do withal; then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [*Exeunt*

SCENE 5. *The same. A garden*

Enter LAUNCELOT, LORENZO, *and* JESSICA

Lor. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

Lor. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then bid them prepare dinner.

Laun. That is done too, sir; only 'cover' is the word.

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Laun. For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in

to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern. [*Exit*

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if on earth he do not merit it,
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

Lor. I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk,
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

Jes. Well, I'll set you forth. [*Exeunt*

ACT IV

Scene 1. *Venice. A court of justice*

Enter the Duke, *the* Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salanio, *and others*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?
Ant. Ready, so please your grace.
Duke. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.
Ant. I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.
Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.
Salan. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter Shylock

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 't is thought
Thou 'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal;

Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:
But, say, it is my humour: is it answer'd?
What if my house be troubled with a rat
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What, are you answer'd yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, at the bagpipe; for affection,
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a woollen bagpipe; but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.
Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.
Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love?
Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?
Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.
Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?
Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do any thing most hard,
As seek to soften that—than which what's harder?
His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.
Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.
Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.
Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?
Shy. What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds

Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer
'The slaves are ours': so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.

Salan. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

Bass. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

Ant. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me:
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA, *dressed like a lawyer's clerk*

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace. [*Presenting a letter*

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen: but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.
Gra. O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolvish, bloody, starved and ravenous.
Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.
Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?
Ner. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.
Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.
Clerk. [*Reads*] Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, bettered with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his

lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA, *dressed like a doctor of laws*

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informed throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
You stand within his danger, do you not?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'T is mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But, mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er;
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'T will be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 't is, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por. Shylock, there 's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.
Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.
Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgement: by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.
Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgement.
Por. Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.
Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!
Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
Shy. 'T is very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!
Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.
Shy. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge?
'Nearest his heart': those are the very words.
Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh?
Shy. I have them ready.
Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?
Por. It is not so express'd: but what of that?
'T were good you do so much for charity.
Shy. I cannot find it; 't is not in the bond.
Por. You, merchant, have you any thing to say?
Ant. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.
Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.
Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.
Gra. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.
Ner. 'T is well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shy. [*Aside*] These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
[*Aloud*] We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.
Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.
Shy. Most rightful judge!
Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.
Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!
Por. Tarry a little: there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh':
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.
Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!
Shy. Is that the law?
Por. Thyself shalt see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.
Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!
Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.
Bass. Here is the money.
Por. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.
Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!
Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Of the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Por. He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

Gra. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?

Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shy. Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.

Por. Tarry, Jew:
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he did contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly and directly too

Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.
Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.
Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.
Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.
Shy. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.
Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?
Gra. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.
Ant. So please my lord the duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content,—so he will let me have
The other half in use,—to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter:
Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd of
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.
Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.
Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shy. I am content.
Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.
Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.
Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.
Gra. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.
[*Exit Shylock*
Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.
Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.
Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.
[*Exeunt Duke and his train*
Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.
Ant. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.
Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.
Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.
Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well.—(Act iv. 1. 393, 394.)

[*To Ant.*] Give me your gloves, I 'll wear them for your sake;
[*To Bass.*] And, for your love, I 'll take this ring from you:
Do not draw back your hand; I 'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.
Bass. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.
Por. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.
Bass. There 's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.
Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.
Bass. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.
Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!
[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa*
Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.
Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.
[*Exit Gratiano*
Come, you and I will thither presently;

And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio. [*Exeunt* 455

SCENE 2. *The same. A street*

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA

Por. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed
And let him sign it: we'll away to-night
And be a day before our husbands home:
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en:
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring.—(Act iv. 2. 5–7.)

Enter GRATIANO

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en: 5
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

Por. That cannot be:
His ring I do accept most thankfully:
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
Gra. That will I do.
Ner. Sir, I would speak with you.
[*Aside to Por.*] I 'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.
Por. [*Aside to Ner.*] Thou mayst, I warrant.
We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we 'll outface them, and outswear them too.
[*Aloud*] Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will tarry.
Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house? [*Exeunt*

ACT V

Scene 1. *Belmont. Avenue to Portia's house*

Enter Lorenzo *and* Jessica

Lor. The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.
Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.
Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand

Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

Lor. In such a night as this.—(Act v. 1. 1.)

Jes. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.
Lor. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew 15

And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.
Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo sware he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.
Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.
Jes. I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?
Steph. A friend.
Lor. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?
Steph. Stephano is my name; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.
Lor. Who comes with her?
Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?
Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT

Laun. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!
Lor. Who calls?
Laun. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?
Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!
Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola! where? where?

Lor. Here.

Laun. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning. [*Exit*

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter: why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air.
[*Exit Stephano*

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn:
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music. [*Music*

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,

Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Ner. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by, and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

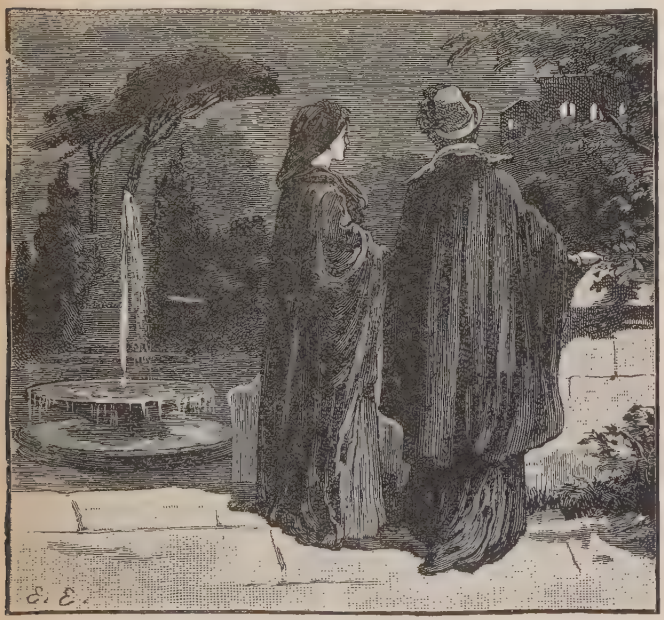
Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!

Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked. [*Music ceases*
Lor. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.



Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.—(Act v. 1. 89–91.)

Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.
Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.
Por. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?

Lor. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.
Por. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you. [*A tucket sounds*
Lor. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.
Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, *and their followers*

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.
Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me:
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.
Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.
Por. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.
Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.
Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.
Gra. [*To Ner.*] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:
Would he were dead that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

Por. A quarrel, ho, already! what 's the matter?
Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not'.
Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God 's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on 's face that had it.
Gra. He will, an if he live to be a man.
Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.
Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.
Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
An 't were to me, I should be mad at it.
Bass. [*Aside*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.
Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed

Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.
Por. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.
Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.
Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will never be your wife
Until I see the ring.
Ner. No, nor I yours
Till I again see mine.
Bass. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.
Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.
Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;

Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;

Bass. Pardon me, good lady.—(Act v. 1. 219.)

I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—
Por. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.
Bass. Nay, but hear me:
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.
Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.
Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.
Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.
Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!
Por. I had it of him. You are all amaz'd:
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you
And even but now return'd; I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly:
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter.
Ant. I am dumb.
Bass. Were you the doctor, and I knew you not?

Gra. Were you the clerk, and yet I knew you not?
Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.
Por. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.
Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.
Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.
Por. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.
Gra. Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt*

NOTES

Act I—Scene 1

Time—Morning

1. **In sooth**, truly.

2. **It**, *i.e.* his sadness.

4. These repetitions show that Antonio is speaking jokingly.

6. Sadness makes me such a senseless fellow.

8. **ocean**, three syllables.

9. **argosies**, large trading ships. (*Argosy* is a corruption of *Ragosie*, a ship made at *Ragusa*, a port in Dalmatia.)

with portly sail, with sails swelling in the wind.

10. **signiors**, nobles. (Ital. *signore*, Lat. *senior*, elder.)

11. **pageants of the sea**. The sea-going vessels are compared (*as it were*) to the large decorated barges used in shows, such as Shakespeare may often have seen on the Thames.

12. **overpeer**, overlook. The huge vessels are represented as looking down with a kind of condescension on the smaller ones.

petty traffickers, small trading ships.

13. **do them reverence**. The smaller ships seem, by their lighter movements, to bow respectfully to the heavier argosies.

15. **venture**, what is risked in foreign trade. Traders with foreign lands were in the sixteenth century called *merchant adventurers*.

17. **still**, constantly. The word almost always has this meaning in Shakespeare.

17, 18. Judging the quarter from which the wind blows by watching the direction in which the plucked grass was carried.

25. **hour-glass**, in Shakespeare's time fixed near the pulpit in a church. So called because sand was timed to run from the upper compartment to the lower in an hour or part of an hour.

26. **flats**, sand-banks under water.

27. **Andrew**, ship. So called from *Andrea Doria*, a famous admiral of Genoa.

dock'd, fixed in by the sand, as a ship is held fast in *dock* by the stocks.

28. **Vailing**, lowering.

high-top, platform near the head of a mast.

ribs, bent timbers forming the framework of the hull.

29. **To kiss her burial**, so as to touch the sand which buries it. *Burial* = burial-place, grave.

31. **straight**, straightway; at once.

32. **touching but**, merely touching.

35. **but even**, "only just".

worth this, worth this much, so much.

35, 36. **now . . . now**, one moment . . . the next.

36–38. If I can imagine all these misfortunes, can I not also imagine myself made sad if they really occurred?

38. **bechanced**, having happened.

40. **to think**, from thinking.

42. **bottom**, merchant vessel.

43, 44. **nor is my whole estate Upon the fortune**, nor does my position in regard to property depend entirely on the chances.

47. **Not . . . neither**, note the double negative.

50. **Janus**, Roman guardian god of gates, figured with two heads because a gate looks two ways. His principal festival was on New Year's Day: hence the name of the month, *January*. In some representations one of the faces is old and wrinkled, the other young and laughing. Hence Salarino invokes him when speaking of the two different products of Nature.

52. **peep through their eyes**, "screw their eyes up" in laughter.

53. **like parrots**, *i.e.* senselessly, because parrots cannot know what they are talking about.

54. **other** = others.

56. **Nestor**, regarded as the gravest of the Grecian heroes; therefore not likely to laugh at a poor joke.

57. **comes**, singular verb referring to several subjects (*Bassanio*, *Gratiano*, and *Lorenzo*). This is often the case when the verb comes first.

58. **Fare ye well** means literally "May you go well". (O.E. *faran*, to go; we have it still in *ferry*, a way over a river; *welfare*, well-being; *thoroughfare*, a way for going through, &c.)

61. **prevented me**, been beforehand with me. (Lat. *prae*, before; *venire*, to come.) Salarino refers especially to the merry Gratiano.

62. Lay stress on **your**.

66. **when shall we laugh?** when shall we have some merriment together?

67. You are becoming quite strangers; must you really go?

68. This refers to the question *when shall we laugh?* Salarino answers: "We will arrange to be at leisure when you are". A supper was arranged; see ii. 2. 155 and 185.

74. You take life, worldly affairs, too seriously; you think too much of merely worldly matters.

79. **mine**, my part (is).

play the fool, play the part of Fool, a comic character often appearing in old plays.

80. **old wrinkles**, wrinkles as of old age.

82. **mortifying**, causing death. Sighs and groans were believed to drain the heart of blood.

89. The stern unsmiling faces of the men are compared to the unruffled surface of a stagnant pond, on which the green vegetable growth forms a covering like cream or a mantle.—**cream and mantle**, a characteristic redundancy for the sake of picturesqueness.

90. **do**, *i.e.* (who) do.

a wilful stillness entertain, keep up an obstinate silence.

91, 92. **to be dress'd in an opinion Of**, to gain a reputation for.

92. **conceit**, thoughtfulness.

93. **Sir Oracle.** In Shakespeare's time the title *Sir* was often applied to men who were not knights, as a mark both of respect and of contempt; more especially to clergymen.

95–99. I know people of this kind whose silence is thought a proof of wisdom, but who, if they spoke, would cause their hearers to call them fools, and so put their souls in danger.—See *Matthew* v. 22, "Whosoever shall say to his brother . . . Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire".

102. **fool**, foolish, noun for adjective.

108. **moe**, old form of *more*.

110. **for this gear**, for this matter, *i.e.* on account of what you have said about silent people. (O.E. *gearwe*, things got ready, from *gearo*, ready.)

112. **neat**, ox or calf.

113. *i.e.* Where's the joke?

123–130. You know how I have damaged my fortune by living in grand style far beyond my income. I do not complain that I have had to reduce my expenditure; my great anxiety is to clear off the debts which are the result of my extravagance.

123. **disabled**, rendered *unable* to bear the expenses.

124. **swelling port**, "showy" bearing.

125. **continuance**, *i.e.* continuance *of*. Shakespeare often omitted the preposition.

126. **make moan to be abridged**, complain that I am cut short.

130. **gaged**, pledged.

136. **still**, constantly, as in line 17.

137. **Within the eye of honour**, within what I may look on as honourable. *Eye*=the field of vision.

139. **occasions**, pronounce as four syllables.

141. **his**=its. *His* was once neuter as well as masculine, and *its* was not generally used until the seventeenth century.

141. **fellow of the self-same flight**, arrow of the same length and weight, constructed so as to have the same range.

142. **advised**, careful.

144. **childhood proof**, experiment used in childhood.

145. **pure innocence.** Bassanio means that the proposal he is about to make is not devised to trick his friend: he freely acknowledges his faults and the difficulties they have brought him to.

148. **another arrow**, *i.e.* another loan. Bassanio keeps up the idea of the "childhood proof".

self, same.

150. **As** = since.

watch the aim, be more careful how I spend the money.

151. **latter hazard**, second loan which you risk.

154. In "beating about the bush", not going straight to the point in making your demand on my love. Antonio wishes his friend to drop his comparisons and tell him plainly what he wants.

156. In doubting my willingness to do my utmost for you.

160. **prest unto it**, ready for it. (O.F. *prest*, modern F. *prêt*.)

161. **richly left**, an orphan heiress.

163. **sometimes**, at some past time; on his former visit, see scene 2, 96–102.

164. **fair speechless messages.** Bassanio having gone to Belmont merely in attendance upon a nobleman, had had few opportunities of talking with Portia. But she had shown her interest in him by the looks she gave him.

165, 166. **undervalued To**, less worthy than.

166. **Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.** Portia, daughter of Cato, a great Roman who lived just before Cæsar's time, was married to Brutus, afterwards one of Cæsar's assassins. She was a woman famous for great courage and virtue, and is one of the characters in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*.

170–172. Jason was son of Aeson, king of Iolcus. His uncle Pelias, who had usurped the throne, promised to give up the kingdom if Jason secured the golden fleece, which was hung on an oak at the entrance to a grove sacred to the god of war, at Colchis, on the shore of the Black Sea. Jason built the ship *Argo*, set sail with some companions called the Argonauts, and after perilous adventures secured the fleece.

174. To become a suitor on equal terms with the rest.

175. **presages**, (which) foretells; omission of relative.

thrift, success.

178. **commodity**, goods which could be pledged.

181. **rack'd**, stretched, strained.

182. **furnish thee to**, provide you with means to visit.

183. **presently**, at the *present* moment; at once.

185. **of my trust or for my sake**, on my credit in business as an honourable merchant, or as a personal favour to a friend.

Act I—Scene 2

Time—Morning of the same day

1. **By my troth**, a common exclamation, like our "upon my word". *Troth* = truth.

7, 8. **It is no mean happiness . . . in the mean**, It is no *low degree* of happiness to be placed midway between over-abundant wealth and poverty.

8, 9. Those who are over-rich sooner show signs of age; those who are comfortable, "in the mean", live longer.

8. **comes sooner by**, sooner gets. Compare "came by it" scene 1, line 3.

10. **sentences**, maxims; wise opinions.

17-19. Men's reason (**brain**) endeavours to control their natural disposition (**blood**); but when a man's passion is aroused, he passes the bounds set by him when coolly thinking (**cold decree**).

19-21. As a hare skips over the meshes of a net laid by a hunter who is slow-footed compared with the animal (**cripple**), so a rash headstrong youth lightly passes over sober, slowly-reasoned advice.

26. **nor refuse none**. In modern English this would be "or refuse any", but in earlier times the double negative was common.

28-32. There is some confusion of construction here. The sense is, 'the right casket will not be chosen except by one who shall rightly love'.

35. **over-name**, name them one by one.

37. **level**, guess.

40, 41. **appropriation**, addition.

41. **parts**, qualities, powers.

43. **County Palatine**, a *count* with royal rights or ruling over land connected with a king's *palace*.

46, 47. **the weeping philosopher**, perhaps alluding to Heraclitus, who wept over the follies of mankind.

48. **unmannerly**, (1) unsuitable to his age, or (2) churlish.

52. **by**, concerning.

58. **every man in no man**, imitates everybody and has no individuality.

59. **throstle**, song-thrush.

69. You will bear me witness that my stock of English is very small.

70. **a proper man's picture**, the picture of a handsome man.

72. **suited**, dressed.

doublet, close-fitting coat.

73. **round hose**, breeches puffed out at the hips.

bonnet, head-dress; used then for a man's as well as a woman's.

80. **became his surety**, bound himself to see the promise carried out.

80, 81. **sealed under**, put his seal *under* that of the man he was surety for.

81. **another**, *i.e.* another box on the ear.

There is an allusion to the frequent alliances between France and Scotland against England.

88. **an**, if; a short form of *and*.

fall, happen. Portia means, if all her other suitors fail to choose aright, and she is left with only the German, she would rather be unmarried than married to him.

91. **you should refuse to perform**: for *should*, we now say *would*.

94. **contrary**, wrong. Note that Portia is quite aware which is the right casket.

100. **which is**. They made up their minds singly, but all reached the same conclusion. Hence *is*.

102. **by some other sort**: either (1) in some other *manner*, or (2) by some other *lot*, from Lat. *sors*, a lot.

102, 103. **your father's imposition**, conditions laid down by your father.

104. **Sibylla** is not really a proper name. The *Sibyls* were prophetesses in ancient Rome. Shakespeare alludes to the most famous, the Sibyl of Cumae, who was granted by Apollo the privilege of living for as many years as she could hold grains of dust in her hand.

105. **Diana**, Roman huntress-goddess, never married, regarded as the type of purity.

121. **four**. *Six* have been mentioned.

127–129. No matter how good he may be, if he is dark-complexioned I would rather have him for a confessor than for a husband.

130. **Sirrah**, fellow; used in addressing servants, and also as a mark of contempt.

131. **Whiles** = whilst: it is strictly the possessive case of the noun *while*, time, used as an adverb.

Act I—Scene 3

Time—A little later than Scene 1

1. **ducats**. The *ducat* (a coin so called from being issued in a *duchy*) was worth in Venice about 4*s.* 8*d.*

5. **bound**, as a surety. He would bind himself to repay the loan in three months.

7. **May you stead me?** Can you aid me?

pleasure me, do me the favour I ask.—Bassanio is made impatient by Shylock's cautious "well".

12. **good**, (in a business sense) solvent, able to fulfil his pledges. Bassanio misunderstands.

16. **in supposition**, imaginary, for they depended on the success of his foreign "ventures", which were not yet ended.

17. **Tripolis**, seaport in Syria, trading with Venice in glass.

18. **the Rialto**, the meeting-place (like our Exchange) of merchants, on an island called *Rivo Alto* (high bank). (Venice is built on a number of small islands.)

20. **squandered**, sent out in all directions.

32, 33. Alluding to Christ's permitting unclean spirits to pass into the herd of swine: Matt. viii. 32.

37. **he comes here**, he *that* comes here; omission of relative.

39. **fawning publican.** The Jews hated and despised the Roman tax-gatherers, and Shylock is particularly irritated by Antonio's courteous and amiable manner.

40. **for**, because; so **for that** in line 41.

41. **simplicity**, behaviour of a simpleton.

43. **usance**, interest.

44. **catch him upon the hip**, get him unawares into my power: a wrestler's phrase.

47. That is, where Shylock's chances of business could be most injured by Antonio.

51. **debating of**, considering.

53. **gross**, whole amount.

56. **soft!** gently; wait a moment.

57. **Rest you fair**, a salutation. Shylock pretends he has only just noticed Antonio.

60. **excess**, interest, the sum by which the total amount *exceeds* the principal.

61. **ripe wants**, urgent needs, requiring instant satisfaction, as ripe fruit needs plucking.

62. **possess'd**, informed. This is said to Bassanio.

63. **would**, *i.e.* would *have*, wish to have.

68. **Upon advantage**, at interest.

I do never use it, it is not my custom.

69–82. See *Genesis* xxx.

71. See *Genesis* xxvii. Rebekah suggested the trick by which Jacob supplanted Esau.

76. **were compromised**, had made a mutual agreement.

77. **eanlings**, new-born lambs. (O.E. *eanian*, to bring forth.)

pied, spotted.

88. That is, was this story placed in the Bible as a defence of interest?

89. **is**, singular verb, because **gold and silver** = money; so *it* in next line. See note on i. 1. 57.

91. **note me, signior.** Antonio pays no attention to Shylock's request, but turns his back and speaks insultingly of the Jew to

Bassanio. Shylock meanwhile pretends to be calculating the rate of interest.

92. Now a common proverb, suggested by Matthew iv. 4–6, where the devil quotes Scripture in his temptation of Christ.

99. **shall we be?** are we to be? **beholding** = beholden, obliged.

103. **Still**, constantly.

104. Patient endurance is our distinguishing mark. **tribe** means here the whole race of Jews, who were persecuted and plundered in Christian countries.

106. **gaberdine**, long smock-frock of coarse cloth. (Span. *gabardina.*)

109. **Go to**, come, consider.

111. **void your rheum**, discharge your spittle.

112. **foot**, kick.

117. **in a bondman's key**, in the whining tones of a slave.

118. **bated**, weakened, lessened.

124. **like**, likely.

127, 128. When did a friend take of his friend money that has proceeded (**a breed**, *i.e.* interest) from money lent (**metal**), seeing that money, being lifeless metal, cannot naturally increase (**barren**) as animals do?

130. **Who, if he break.** There is no verb to *who*. It may, perhaps, be regarded as put for *whom*, and objective after *exact the penalty*.

break, break his agreement, fail to repay the loan.

133. **shames**, shameful charges.

134. **doit**, half a farthing. (A Dutch word.)

136. **This is kind I offer**, this offer of mine is a friendly one.

were, conditional (subjunctive mood), *would be.*—Bassanio can scarcely believe his ears when the Jew agrees to lend money without interest, and probably begins to suspect Shylock's good faith. *Were* is the word to lay stress on.

137. **seal me.** *Me* is called *ethic dative*, *i.e.* the dative case of the pronoun standing for the person interested in the action expressed by the verb.

138. **Your single bond**, agreement signed by you *alone*, without sureties.

142. Stated as exactly a pound of your flesh.

145. **Content, i' faith**, an exclamation of acceptance. Antonio is surprised at what he thinks easy terms. He is so guileless himself that he does not suspect Shylock, as Bassanio does.

148. **dwell**, remain, continue.

154. **teaches**, sing. verb with plural noun.

161. **extend**, hold out, offer.

163. Don't wrong me by suspecting the good faith of my friendly offer.

168. **in the fearful guard**, under the charge of a careless fellow, about which I am full of anxiety.

169. **knave**, fellow, servant. (O. E. *cnafa*, boy.)

presently, immediately. Shylock is in a hurry to get his revengeful bond sealed.

Act II—Scene I

Time—Same day, immediately after Act I, Scene 2

2, 3. He compares his dusky skin to a dark-coloured dress (**shadow'd livery**) furnished him by the bright sun.

3. Morocco, in N. Africa, is on the border of the torrid zone.

5. **Phœbus' fire**, the sun. *Phœbus* was the Roman sun-god.

6. **make incision**, make a cut in the body.

7. The deeper the red, the greater was thought to be the courage.

8. **aspect**, accent on second syllable.

9. **fear'd**, made to fear, frightened.

10. **best regarded**, most highly esteemed.

13. **In terms of choice**, with regard to the conditions on which I may choose.

14. **nice**, fanciful.

17. **scanted me**, cut me short, *i.e.* curtailed my freedom.

19. **His wife who**, wife of him who.

20–22. **as fair . . . for my affection**, in as good a position . . . with respect to gaining my love. There may be also a reference to his complexion in *fair*. Portia could well say this, for she cared for none of her suitors.

24. **scimitar**, curved sword with a broad point, used in the East.

25. **the Sophy**, the Shah of Persia, of whom *Soffi*, meaning wise man, was a common title.

26. Who defeated Sultan Solyman in three battles.

Sultan Solyman, Solyman the Magnificent, a Turkish sultan who made an unsuccessful campaign against the Persians in 1535.

32. **Hercules and Lichas.** *Hercules*, grandson of Alcæus (therefore called **Alcides**), was a Greek hero possessed of enormous strength. When quite a babe he strangled snakes that came into his cradle. *Lichas* was his page. The point is that the strong Hercules might be beaten by his smaller page at a game of dice. So, the Prince of Morocco says, he, though a famous and victorious warrior, may be beaten at this lottery by a far meaner man.

42. **be advised**, consider well what you do.

43. **Nor will not**, *i.e.* will never seek another wife. See note on i. 1. 47.

46. **blest**, *i.e.* the most blessed, the superlative being supplied from *cursed'st*.

Act II—Scene 2

Time—A week or perhaps a fortnight after i. 3. Afternoon

Enter **Launcelot.**—The "unthrifty knave" whom Shylock left in charge of his house. He is the chief "comic" character of the play.

8, 9. **scorn running with thy heels**, despise running away. The idea is of an animal kicking up its heels against an object it despises.

9. **pack**, be off. (Literally *pack up* in readiness to go; we still say 'send him packing'.)

10. **Via!** away! begone! (Italian).

10, 11. **for the heavens**, for heaven's sake.

12, 13. **hanging about the neck of my heart.** His conscience tries to restrain his wishes, as one person clings to the neck of another to prevent him going.

15, 16. **did something smack, something grow to**, had something dishonourable in his character. *Grow to* was applied to milk burnt at the bottom of a saucepan, and so having an unpleasant taste and being spoilt.

22, 24. **God bless the mark.** A kind of apology for mentioning the devil. So is **saving your reverence.** Launcelot is either talking to himself, or to a supposed auditor.

25. **incarnal**, *incarnate*, in the flesh. Launcelot and his father love long words, but ludicrously mangle and misuse them.

33. **sand-blind**, half-blind. (*Sand*, a corruption of O.E. *sam*= Lat. *semi*.) The word suggests a pun to Launcelot.

34. **confusions.** Launcelot means *conclusions*.

39. **marry**, Mary, an oath.

41. **By God's sonties**, an oath. *Sonties* is either a corruption of *sanctities*, or of *saintes*, an old plural of *saint*, pronounced as two syllables.

49. **well to live**, perhaps, in good health.

50. **a'**=he.

53. **ergo**, therefore (Latin); but Launcelot does not know what it means.

55. **an 't**=*an it*, if it.

57. **father.** Old men were often called *father* by young men: hence Gobbo does not yet suspect Launcelot to be his son.

59. **Sisters Three**, the three Fates, the goddesses of the Greeks, who controlled man's birth, life, and death.

64. **hovel-post**, the prop of the roof of a shed.

78. Launcelot kneels with his back to his father, who mistakes his back hair for a beard; see line 89.

91. **fill-horse**, cart-horse. The *fills* or *thrills* are the shafts of a cart.

93. **of**=*on*; the two words are often interchanged.

99. **set up my rest**, made up my mind: a phrase used in an old card-game.

109. Bassanio is speaking to a servant as he enters.

110. **of the clock**, contracted to *o'clock*. In Shakespeare's time meals were early: dinner at 11, for instance.

112. **anon**, at once.

115. **Gramercy**! corruption of Fr. *grand merci*, great thanks.

118. **specify**, Launcelot's mistake for *certify*, assure.

119. **infection**, mistake for *affection*.

124. **are scarce cater-cousins**, are hardly on speaking terms.

127. **frutify**, for *certify*.

130. **impertinent**, he means *pertinent*, concerning.

136. **defect**, for *effect*.

139. **preferr'd**, recommended for promotion.

142. **old proverb**, only preserved in the Scottish form, "The grace o' God is gear (wealth) enough".

148. **guarded**, trimmed with braid.

149. **I cannot get a service**. All through this speech Launcelot speaks ironically. Shylock, in finding fault with his "unthrifty knave", has no doubt told him that no other master would have him; that he would never live long or get a wife, &c.

150–152. The sentence is incomplete. Launcelot breaks off at the word **table**, which reminds him of a man putting his hand on the Bible as he takes his oath in a law-court.

151. **table**, palm of the hand.

which doth offer, &c., which says as certainly as a man on his oath that I shall have good fortune. Palmistry is the art of telling fortunes by examining the lines of the hand.

153. **simple** = poor; Launcelot is speaking ironically, of course. The *line of life* is the broadest line on the palm of the hand.

155. **coming-in**, allowance.

158, 159. **for this gear**, for this matter. See note on i. 1. 110.

162. **orderly bestow'd**, set in their proper place.

172. Notice that Bassanio first uses *you* in addressing Gratiano, then *thee*. The second person singular of the pronoun was in Shakespeare's time used among friends, in addressing servants, and in anger to strangers. Bassanio first uses the ordinary *you*; then, when he gives some friendly advice to Gratiano, he adopts a more familiar tone, and uses *thee*.

174. **Parts**, qualities.

176, 177. **show Something too liberal**, appear somewhat too free.

177. **Pray thee**, I beg you; often spelt *Prithee*.

pain, usually *pains*.

178, 179. **To allay . . . skipping spirit**. Gratiano's skipping spirit (*i.e.* lively disposition) is compared to something too hot, which needs cooling.

182. **habit**, behaviour.

187–189. Observe all the customs of refinement like a good boy who has carefully trained himself to appear grave in manner, in order to please his grandmother.

188. **ostent**, appearance, behaviour.

197. **must**, *i.e.* must *go*. The verb of motion is often thus omitted.

Act II—Scene 3

Time—The same day, a little later

2. **Our house is hell.** Shylock is as unpleasant in his home-life as in his business relations.

3. Jessica, being the daughter of a hated Jew, is shut out from all the pleasures which other girls might enjoy. And Shylock is too mean to entertain company belonging to his own race.

10. **exhibit**, for *inhibit*, prevent. He pretends that he cannot speak for weeping.

16, 17. I am his daughter by birth, but I have nothing of my father's character.

17. **manners** meant *conduct* generally in Shakespeare's time.

18. **strife**, between duty to Shylock and love for Lorenzo; Jessica is also troubled by the differences between the faith she has been brought up in and the faith she will have to adopt as Lorenzo's wife.

Act II—Scene 4

Time—The same day, four o'clock

Gratiano and his friends have arranged a masque as a farewell entertainment to their friend Bassanio.

5. **spoke us yet of**, bespoke for ourselves, made arrangements with. Torch-bearers were a necessary part of every troop of masquers.

6. **quaintly order'd**, gracefully arranged.

7. That is, "and it would be better if it were not undertaken".

11. **break up**, open.

12. **hand**, handwriting. We still say, "he writes a fair hand". Lorenzo plays on the word in line 14.

14. **writ**, wrote.

23. **prepare you**, prepare *yourselves*; reflexive.

masque, an entertainment of which acting and dancing formed part, the guests and performers being masked.

24. **provided of.** Shakespeare often used *of* where we should use *with* or another preposition.

36–38. Let misfortune never dare stand in her way except under the excuse (for Jessica herself deserves no ill fortune) that she is a Jew's daughter. *She* in line 37 refers to Misfortune personified; *she* in line 38 to Jessica.

38. **faithless**, without faith, unbelieving; now it means not keeping faith.

Act II—Scene 5

Time—The same day, between four and five

3. **What, Jessica!** Shylock raises his voice and calls his daughter.

gormandise, eat like a gourmand, a glutton. Shylock speaks as though it was pleasant to be in his service: Launcelot has a different opinion.

11. **bid forth**, invited out.

14. Shylock said in i. 3. 35, "I will not eat with you". He goes now so that the suspicious Bassanio may believe him to be sincere in his profession of friendliness.

16. **right loath**, very unwilling. This is an instance of what is known as 'dramatic irony', where a speaker uses words which convey more to the spectators, who are in the secret, than is known by the speaker.

17. **towards my rest**, that will affect my peace of mind.

18. **to-night**, last night.

20. **reproach**. Launcelot means *approach*; Shylock in his **So do I his** takes it literally, blame.

24. **Black-Monday**, Easter Monday, so called because on that day, April 14, 1360, when Edward III was besieging Paris, many of his soldiers died through the bitter cold.

26. **was four year**, four years ago.—Launcelot has his presentiments, but his dates and his memory generally are rather confused.

30. **wry-neck'd fife**, the *player*, who turns his neck awry as he plays.

33. **varnish'd**, painted; or it may refer to the small black masks.

36. **Jacob's staff**, a common name for a pilgrim's staff. See Genesis xxxii. 10, where Jacob says, "with my staff I passed over this Jordan". St. James (*Jacobus* is Latin for *James*), the patron of pilgrims, is represented as holding a staff.

37. **of**=for.

43. **a Jewess' eye.** A play on the common expression, "worth a Jew's eye", used to express something very precious.

44. **Hagar's offspring.** Hagar, one of Abraham's wives, was driven away into the wilderness with her son Ishmael. Hence the name *Ishmaelite* or *son of Hagar* as a name for outcasts and a term of reproach.

46. **patch**, fool; so called either from the patched appearance of a jester's motley coat, or from Ital. *pazzo*, a fool.

47. **Snail-slow in profit**, slow as a snail as far as usefulness in my business is concerned.

48. **the wild-cat** sleeps nearly all day, seeking its prey at night. It was common in Shakespeare's time, but is now only rarely found in remote parts of Scotland.

54. **fast**, firm.

56. **crost**, crossed, interfered with.

Act II—Scene 6

Time—The same day, just before 9 p.m.

1. **pent-house**, slooping roof, projecting into the street. (Once spelt *pentice*; from Lat. *pendere*, to hang.)

3. **out-dwells**, out-stays, delays beyond.

5. **Venus' pigeons**, properly doves, which draw the chariot of Venus, the Roman goddess of love.

7. To keep promises already made.

obliged = pledged.

9. **sits down**, sits down *with*. See note on i. 1. 125.

10. **untread again**, retrace.

11. **tedious measures**, which becomes the long distance, tedious, wearisome, on the return journey.

14. **younker**, young nobleman. (Dutch *jonge*, young; *heer*, sir.)

15. **scarfed**, decked with flags.

puts from, puts off from.

17. Allusion to the Prodigal Son, Luke xv. 11–32.

18. **over-weather'd**, weather-beaten.

ribs; see note on i. 1. 28.

This speech is unusually serious for the merry Gratiano.

21. **your patience**, I ask your pardon.

abode, delay.

30. **who**, whom.

35. **exchange**, of clothing.

38. **Cupid**, son of Venus. His arrows were supposed to fill people with love, causing them to commit follies at which he laughed. But even Cupid would blush with shame at this folly of Jessica's.

42. **light**, a play on *light*, meaning bright, and *light* in the sense of gay, wanton.

43. **office of discovery**, duty of a torch-bearer to throw light on things.

44. **obscured**, hidden.

45. **garnish**, dress.

47. The time of complete darkness is fast passing away. **close** here means secret, concealing.

48. **stay'd**, waited.

49. **gild**. Another pun. Jessica means provide herself with gold, with a reference to the meaning of *gild* as *adorn, beautify*.

51. **by my hood**. Gratiano was probably disguised as a friar, and intends a kind of pun on *hood* as in *manhood*, &c. *By my knighthood* was a common oath.

52. **Beshrew**, curse.

but = if I do not.

63. **nine o'clock.** The dinner was to be at five, and the masque at six.

64. **is come about**, has changed in the right direction.

65. **presently**, immediately.

67. **on 't**, of it.

Act II—Scene 7

Time—Afternoon of the same day as Scene 1

1. **discover**, disclose, reveal.

4. **who**, which: *who* is now used only for persons, *which* for things and animals.

12. **withal**, with it.

14. **back again**, in reverse order.

20. **golden.** The prince has a high opinion of himself.

22. **virgin**, white, as a sign of purity.

26. **rated**, *i.e.* by others—if you are taken by others at your own estimate of yourself.

29, 30. To be doubtful about my own merits would be to disparage myself, and a mark of weakness.

40. **mortal breathing saint**, not the carved figure of a saint in a stone shrine, but a living breathing saint. The prince pays a high compliment to Portia.

41. **Hyrcanian deserts**, south-east of the Caspian Sea, supposed to be full of tigers.

42. **throughfares.** Now spelt *thoroughfare*.

44. **ambitious head**, wave that rises high as though with ambition.

46. **spirits**, courageous men.

49. **like**, likely.

damnation, ruinous to my hopes, and a sin in itself.

50, 51. **it were . . . cerecloth**, it would be too common to enclose (as the ribs enclose the body) her shroud.

51. **cerecloth**, wax-cloth, shroud, the dress of a dead person. (Lat. *cera*, wax.)

obscure, dark.

53. **undervalued**, that is, silver being one-tenth the value of gold.

56. Coin called the *angel*, worth 10*s*.

57. **insculp'd upon.** The figure of St. Michael piercing the dragon was so cut as to stand out above the surface of the coin.

60. **thrive I as I may**, let my success be what it will.

63. **A carrion Death**, a fleshless skull.

68. **But**, merely, only.

77. **part**, depart.

Act II—Scene 8

Time—The morning after Scene 6

Shylock has discovered his daughter's flight, and suspects Bassanio of having had a hand in it.

4. **raised**, aroused.

8. **gondola**, a kind of boat very common in Venice, where people go from place to place by water, the streets being canals.

12. **passion**, outburst of feeling.

15–22. Shylock is more distressed for the loss of his money than for that of his daughter.

25. **look he keep his day**, take care to be ready with the money on the day arranged.

27. **reason'd**, talked.

29. **miscarried**, was wrecked.

30. **richly fraught**, with a valuable cargo.

33. **You were best**, *you had better*, as we should say.

37, 38. **make some speed . . . return**, somewhat hasten his return.

38–49. This passage gives us a wonderful picture of the affectionate, unselfish character of Antonio.

39. **Slubber**, slur over, hurry.

40. Wait until time has fully ripened your purposes.

41. **for**, as for, in regard to.

42. **mind of love**, loving mind.

44. **To**, in.

ostents; see note on ii. 2. 188.

45. **conveniently**, fittingly.

46. **even there**, *i.e.* even in public, or perhaps "at that point".

48. Showing himself of very sensitive feelings.

50. That is, if it were not for his affection for Bassanio, Antonio would have no pleasure in life.

52. **quicken**, enliven.

his embraced heaviness, sadness which has such a hold on him that he appears to cling to it.

Act II—Scene 9

Time—The day after Scene 8

1. **straight**, immediately, at once.

3. **election**, choice.

presently, at once.

10. **unfold**, disclose, tell.

18. **hazard**, the chance of choosing.

19. This have I taken in hand to do.

25, 26. **meant By**, intended to refer to.

27. **fond**, foolish.

28. **martlet**, house-martin, which builds its nest under the eaves of a house.

29. **in the weather**, exposed to the weather.

30. Even in the way of accidents, and where they are likely to be most violent.

32. **jump**, agree.

38. **cozen**, woo.

41–43. In these lines Shakespeare no doubt expressed the feeling of many Englishmen with regard to corruption in high places. This feeling broke out twenty odd years later in the prosecution of Lord Bacon for taking bribes.

41. **estates, degrees**, ranks, titles.

42. **derived**, obtained.

clear, bright, unspotted (Lat. *clarus*).

44. How many would then keep their hats on as masters, who now stand bareheaded as servants!

46–49. How many men, as base in character and descent as the lowest peasants, would then be removed (**glean'd**) from the position they wrongfully hold among those who are really honourable in character and birth (**true seed of honour**!)! How many really honourable men would then be rescued from low positions to which they had been reduced, and would be set up again with all the outward signs of rank!

53. You pause so long that you must be disappointed.

55. **schedule**, small written roll of parchment.

61, 62. The same man cannot be both defendant and judge in his own case.

61. **distinct**, accent on first syllable.

68. **I wis**, I know.

69. **so was this**, in the casket.

70. **I**, *i.e.* the fool's head.

71. **sped**, done with.

73. **By**, in proportion to.

79. **deliberate**, careful in making up their mind.

82. **goes**: singular verb with two nouns.

84. **my lord**. Portia mocks her gentleman-in-waiting, who has come in with a self-important swagger.

88. **sensible regreets**, substantial tokens of respect.

89. **commends**, salutations, compliments.

courteous breath, polite verbal messages.

90. **Yet**, as yet, up to now.

91. One whose appearance as an ambassador promises so well for the suitor who sent him. **likely**, promising.

93. **costly**, rich (in fruits, &c.).

94. **fore-spurrer**, fore-runner, rider in advance.

95. The enthusiastic gentleman's language is a little high-flown.

97. **high-day**, elegant (as though the servant's wit was dressed in holiday clothes).

99. **post**, speedy messenger. News was carried by messengers, who stopped to change horses at fixed stations (*posts*) on the way.

100. **lord Love**, Cupid.—Nerissa means, "I hope it will turn out to be Bassanio".

Act III—Scene 1

Time—About 11 weeks after the opening scene of the play

2. **it lives there unchecked**, the report is still going about uncontradicted.

7. **gossip Report**, Report, my talkative acquaintance. *Report* is personified as a gossiping old woman fond of ginger.

10. **knapped**, gnawed.

12. **slips of prolixity**, slips through talking too much.

13. **crossing the plain highway of talk**. Salanio says he will tell his story straightforwardly, without wandering.

16. **the full stop**. Salanio's tongue must wag in spite of himself, and Salarino tells him to finish his story.

21. **cross my prayer**, come between you and me before I have time to say *amen* to your good wishes.

29. **complexion**, nature. It is the nature of young birds when fledged to leave the parents' nest.

35. **rhenish**, a white wine; so called because made in the part of Germany through which the Rhine (Lat. *Rhenus*) flows.

37. **match**, bargain.

48. **half a million**, from gaining half a million ducats.

52. **dimensions**, size and shape.

61, 62. **what is his humility?** Humility, meekness, is one of the virtues of a truly Christian man. Shylock asks what meekness does a Christian show if he is wronged?

63. **sufferance**, patient endurance.

76. **Frankfort**, in Germany. Then famous for its fairs.

77. **curse**, the evils foretold in Scripture against the Jews.—Shylock argues that the curse never fell till now because *he* had never felt it. Notice how this fine touch shows the selfishness of the man.

78. **that**, the diamond.

81. **hearsed**, in a hearse on the way to burial.

82. **so**, so much for that.

85. **no ill luck stirring**, &c. Shylock is impatient to hear that misfortune has fallen on Antonio, but so far the only misfortune has been his own.

92. **Tripolis**; see i. 3. 17. Tripoli is in N. Africa.

98. Notice how Tubal works on Shylock's feelings. First he makes him happy by telling of Antonio's losses, then plunges him into grief with his tale of Jessica's extravagance.

104, 105. **cannot choose but break**, cannot help becoming bankrupt.

111. **turquoise**, precious stone of blue colour, found in east Persia. It was supposed to preserve love between man and wife.

Leah, his dead wife.

114. **undone**, ruined.

116. **fee me an officer**, arrange with an officer to be ready to arrest Antonio as soon as the bond becomes due.

119. **synagogue**: churches were common business resorts in Shakespeare's time. 'Paul's walk', the nave of St. Paul's cathedral, was as busy as the exchange.

Act III—Scene 2

Time—A fortnight after Scene 1

4. **but it is not love.** Portia will modestly await the result of Bassanio's choice before she actually confesses her love. And yet her whole speech expresses it.

6. Hatred does not give advice of such a kind as that which I have just now given you.

11. **forsworn**, guilty of breaking my oath. Portia had promised (her father perhaps) not to reveal the secret of the caskets.

15. **o'erlook'd**, bewitched.

16. Portia would prettily make a slight pause before the second **yours**.

20, 21. If it prove so (that I, who am yours in love, am not yours through your choosing the wrong casket), then Fortune ought to be punished and not I.—She means that it would be a *hell* to her to live without Bassanio now that she loved him.

22. **peize**, weigh down, make the time pass heavily, slowly. (Fr. *peser*.)

25. **upon the rack.** Bassanio compares his feelings, in his uncertainty, to the sufferings of a man stretched on the rack, the wooden frame on which prisoners were tortured in order to make them confess their crime. Traitors especially were tortured.—Notice how from the very beginning Portia teases Bassanio.

29. **fear the enjoying**, doubt whether I shall enjoy.

30, 31. Snow and fire might as well be expected to agree like friends, as my love with any treasonable thoughts.

33. In order to end their torture, tortured men often made any statements, true or false, which they thought would be acceptable to their persecutors.

36. **Had** = would have.

39. **let me to**, let me *go* to; omission of verb of motion.

43. Another mark of Portia's good wishes. The Princes of Morocco and Arragon were not favoured with music.

44. **a swan-like end.** Swans were fabled to sing just before their death.

49. **flourish,** the blast of trumpets.

51–53. This passage refers to the custom of musicians, hired for the wedding, waking the bridegroom in the early morning: they afterwards accompanied him to the house of the bride.

54. **presence,** handsome appearance.

55–57. When Laomedon was building Troy, he promised Apollo and Neptune a certain sum for their help. On the completion of the work Laomedon refused to pay, so Apollo sent a plague, a flood, and a sea-monster against the land. The oracle said that the only way of putting an end to the plague and the flood was to sacrifice Laomedon's daughter Hesione to the monster. Hercules (**Alcides,** see note to ii. 1. 32) promised to rescue Hesione in return for a present of horses; he rescued her, but did not get the horses. —The words *with much more love* in line 54 refer to the fact that it was not for love, because he felt none, but for the sake of the reward, that Hercules rescued Hesione.

57. **I stand for sacrifice,** like Hesione.

58. **Dardanian,** another name for Trojan, of Troy.

wives, women. (O. E. *wif* meant woman.)

59. **bleared visages,** eyes bloodshot, and faces disfigured with weeping.

61. **Live thou,** if you live.

62. **fray,** fight. Bassanio going to make his choice is likened to Hercules going to fight the monster.

63. **fancy,** love. The song is perhaps intended to warn Bassanio against choosing merely by appearances.

73. During the music Bassanio has been thinking. Now he speaks his thought: the outward appearance may be very unlike the real things.

74. **still,** constantly.

75 77. A bad case in law may be made to appear good by the eloquence of counsel.

76. **season'd.** The lawyer's pleasing (**gracious**) voice puts out of sight the badness of the plea, as sauces and condiments cover up the bad taste of tainted meat.

78. **some sober brow,** some grave-looking person.

79. **approve,** justify.

81. **simple,** obvious.

82. **his** = its.

83. **all,** altogether.

85. **Mars,** God of War.

86. **livers white as milk;** cowards were once thought to have white livers.

87, 88. These put on the beard, the mark of manliness, only in order to make themselves look formidable. **excrement** = excrescence, outgrowth. (Lat. *ex*, out; *crescere*, to grow.)

91. **lightest**, a pun on *light* in weight, and *light* in the sense of fickle.

93. Which wave in the wind as though they are merrily playing with it.

94. **Upon supposed fairness**, placed on what appears beautiful, but is not.—Referring to the made-up complexions of some of the court ladies.

96. **in**, *i.e.* being in.

92–96. It was extremely common in olden days for ladies to dye their hair to a golden hue.

97. **guiled**, treacherous, deceitful.

99. **an Indian beauty**, *i.e.* a dark-coloured woman, who, though a beauty in her own land, would not be considered beautiful by a European.

102. Midas was the fabled king of Phrygia, who, being allowed by the god Bacchus to ask any favour he pleased, begged that all that he touched might be changed to gold. But when even his food and drink changed to gold, he feared to die of starvation, and begged that the power might be removed.

103. **drudge**, slave; because silver was the metal most used for coins.

104. **meagre**, poor in appearance and value.

108. **fleet**, fly away, vanish.

109. **thoughts**, anxieties.

rash-embraced despair, despair that is felt rashly, without sufficient cause.

115. **counterfeit**, portrait.

117. It is a common experience that the eyes of a well-painted portrait seem to follow a person looking at it about the room.

119, 120. Notice the alliteration (the beginning of several words with the same letter): "*s*ugar *b*reath: *so s*weet a *b*ar *s*hould *s*under *s*uch *s*weet".

122. **mesh**, net.

126. **unfurnish'd**, unprovided with a fellow.

127. **shadow**, the picture.

130. **continent**, that which contains.

136. **hold**, consider.

140. I come as directed by the paper, to give a kiss and to receive the lady.

141. **prize**, struggle for a prize.

157. **livings**, estates.

159. **to term in gross**, to state at its full value.

168. **but now**, a moment ago.

170. **even now, but now**, at this present moment.

172-175. The giving of the ring, so natural and unforced an incident, has an important bearing on the end of the play.

175. Be the ground on which I can cry blame on you.

176. **bereft**, robbed.

176, 177. My joy is too great for words, but makes my heart beat faster.

182-184. Where all the exclamations being mingled (**blent**) together, become one wild chorus in which nothing can be distinguished but joy, and that is expressed only in the general sound, and not in clear words.

192. You are so happy that you will not wish to deprive me of any happiness.

196. **so**, provided that.

200. **intermission**, delay. Gratiano means that as Bassanio had very quickly fallen in love with Portia on his previous visit, so *he* had just as quickly loved Nerissa when he saw her.

202. **stood**, depended.

203. **as the matter falls**, as it turns out.

204. Remember that Gratiano is the great talker, who says "an infinite deal of nothing".

205. **roof**, of the mouth.

206. **if promise last**, if the promise is kept. Note the pun.

208, 209. **your fortune Achieved**, you were fortunate enough to win.

212. **faith**, in faith, truly.

214. **infidel**, Jessica.

217, 218. Bassanio is modestly doubting whether his position is of long-standing enough to warrant him in welcoming his friends to Portia's house.

219. **very**, true.

232. **estate**, condition.

235. **royal**, kingly in wealth and estimation.

237. See note to i. 1. 170–172.

239. **shrewd**, evil.

242. **constitution**, temper of mind.

243. **constant**, even-minded.

244. **With leave**, give me leave to look.

258. **Engaged**, pledged.

mere, out and out.

259. **To feed my means**, to increase my property.

260. **as**, like.

263. **hit**, succeeded.

265. **Barbary**, the Barbary states in the north of Africa.

269. **discharge**, pay his debt to.

272. **confound**, ruin.

273. **plies**, presses with petitions.

274. And denies that there is free justice for all parties in Venice.

276. **magnificoes**, nobles.

277. **port**, importance.

persuaded, argued.

278. **envious**, malicious.

289. **best-condition'd**, best-natured.

unwearied, *i.e. most* unwearied: we have to supply a superlative from *best*.

292. **any**, *i.e. in* any one.

294. **For me**, on my account.

295–310. Portia will not come between her husband and his friend, but is eager for Bassanio to hasten to help him. Like Antonio, she is unselfish.

295. **deface**, cancel.

307. **shall hence**, shall go hence.

308. **cheer**, countenance.

313. **forfeit**, forfeited.

315. **between you and I**; *you and I* is such a common phrase that to-day, as in Shakespeare's time, it is quite usual to hear *I* after a preposition.

If I might, &c. Antonio begins to express a wish to see Bassanio; then, remembering that his friend is in the delightful society of Portia, he breaks off, and forbears to urge him, thus affording another instance of his unselfishness.

Act III—Scene 3

Time—Same day as Scene 2

2. Note how Shylock mocks at his helpless victim.

9. **naughty**, worthless.

fond, foolish.

10. **To**, as to.

abroad, out-of-doors.

14. **dull-eyed**, wanting in sense, as we speak of a short-sighted action.

18. **impenetrable cur**, low ill-bred fellow incapable of feeling.

19. **kept**, dwelt.

20. **bootless**, useless.

22. **forfeitures**, penalties.

25. **grant . . . to hold**, allow to hold good, be carried out.

26. **deny the course of law**, refuse to let the law take its course.

29. **commodity**, the advantage that foreigners enjoyed of being

treated as equals with the natives. Another explanation is, "convenience of trading".

32. **bated**, lessened, "pulled me down".

Act III Scene 4

Time—Later in the same day as Scene *2*

2. **conceit**, idea.

3. **amity**, friendship.

6. **gentleman**. Dative case (indirect object). We use the dative without a preposition nowadays only when it comes between the verb and its direct object: *e.g.* "you sent the gentleman relief".

7. **lover**, friend.

9. Than ordinary kindness and generosity can oblige you to be.

11. **Nor shall not**: notice the double negative.

12. **waste**, spend (not necessarily unprofitably).

13. Who love each other equally, just as two oxen yoked together bear equal burdens.

20. In buying the release of Antonio, who resembles Bassanio, who is as dear to me as my soul.

25. **husbandry**, stewardship.

manage, management.

26–31. This is a pious fiction on the part of Portia, in order to conceal her plan of going to Padua to play the lawyer. It was not uncommon in the Middle Ages for ladies to seek refuge in monasteries while their male relatives were absent.

33. Not to refuse this task I put upon you.

35. **lays**, singular verb with two nominatives.

52. **with imagined speed**, quick as thought.

53. **traject**, ferry.

56. **convenient**, suitable to the urgency of the occasion.

59. **of us**, of our seeing them.

60. **habit**, dress.

61, 62. **we are accomplished With that we lack**, we possess what we have not (*i.e.* manliness).

63. **accoutred**, dressed and provided with weapons.

65. **braver grace**, more gallant and distinguished appearance.

66, 67. **And speak . . . reed voice**, and speak in rough uncertain tones, such as a boy has when his voice is breaking.

69. **quaint**, ingenious.

72. **I could not do withal**, I could not help it.

75. **That**, so that.

77. **Jacks**, a common nickname of contempt.

80. **coach**. Coaches came into use in England in the sixteenth

century. Though the scene is laid in Venice and the neighbourhood, Shakespeare ascribes to the Venetians customs and ideas common to the Englishmen of his day.

Act III Scene 5

Time—Day after Scene 4

1. **sirrah**, fellow.

3. **wit-snapper**, one who snaps up what is said in order to exercise his wit on it, joke about it.

6, 7. There is a pun here. Lorenzo means, "Will you lay covers on the table?" Launcelot answers him as if he meant "Will you cover your head?" *i.e.* put your hat on.

9. **quarrelling with occasion**, seizing every opportunity to make perverse replies.

19. **discretion**, judgment in the choice of words.

suited, arranged.

22–24. Many fools of higher rank, with no more intelligence than he has, will turn a serious subject to ridicule for the sake of their joking word.

24. **How cheer'st thou?** what cheer? how are you?

38. **of me**, in me.

40. **anon**, presently.

41. **stomach**, inclination.

44. **set you forth**, give a full description of you. Jessica would probably say this in a joking yet emphatic way; as much as to say, you don't know yet what you'll have to digest in my description.

Act IV Scene 1

Time—Same day as Act iv, Scene 5

1. **What**, exclamation calling attention, like *well* or *now*.

5. **Uncapable**, used in Shakespeare's time as well as *incapable*.

6. **From**: we now say *of*.

7. **qualify**, temper, moderate.

18, 19. That you are continuing this appearance of malicious design only till the hour comes for acting on it.

20. **remorse**, pity, considerateness.

22. **where**, whereas.

24. **loose**, let go.

29. **Enow**, enough. (O.E. *genoh*.)

33. **offices of tender courtesy**, voluntary acts of kindliness.

35. **possess'd**, informed.

37. **due and forfeit**, debt and penalty.

30. Shakespeare appears to have thought that Venice was free by charter from an emperor, just as London had a charter of freedom from Henry I. But Venice was itself a free republic.

43. **say**, suppose.

humour, mood, disposition.

is it answer'd? is that answer sufficient?

47. **love**, *i.e.* that love; omission of relative.

gaping pig, either (1) a squealing pig, or (2) a pig's head served at table. At Queen's College, Oxford, a boar's head is still served up on Christmas-day, with a lemon in its mouth.

49–51. *Affection* is the feeling produced through the senses by outward objects. This is said to be *mistress of passion*, *i.e.* is the cause on which the real mental emotions depend. The meaning is, that things first please or displease the senses, and that then the mind likes or dislikes them accordingly.

53–55. **he . . . he . . . he**, the different men alluded to in lines 49–48.

55. **woollen**, referring to the woollen cloth covering the wind-bag of the bagpipe.

55–57. But he cannot help submitting to the unavoidable shame of offending others, because he himself is offended. Shylock means that a man cannot always explain why he dislikes a thing, but makes the best of it; just as he must put up with being disliked by other people.

59. **lodged**, fixed.

60. **that**, why.

61. **A losing suit.** Shylock would lose his 3000 ducats and gain nothing but worthless flesh.

63. **current**, course, tide.

69. Remember that it is the hard Jew you are arguing with.

71. **main flood**, ocean.

bate his usual height, fall short of the height to which the tide usually rises.

76. **fretten**, disturbed, waved to and fro.

81. In the shortest and plainest way that is suitable.

91. **parts**, duties.

103. **Upon my power**, by my authority.

105. This explains the ease with which Portia secured her disguise. Her messenger Balthasar (iii. 4. 45) arrived in Padua probably just as the summons from the Duke reached Bellario, who, being sick, was easily persuaded to let his spirited cousin proceed to Venice in his place.

120–123. Shylock is sharpening his knife on the *sole* of his shoe. Gratiano says that his *soul* is so hard that he might almost use that for the same purpose.

128. Justice herself is committing a crime in letting you live.

130. **Pythagoras**, the great philosopher (flourished 540-510 B.C.), born at Samos. He is believed to have taught that at a man's death his soul passes into some other body (the *transmigration* of souls).

132, 133. Your dog-like spirit once dwelt in and controlled the actions of a wolf.

133. **who**: there is no verb to this nominative, which may be considered a nominative absolute.

hang'd for slaughter, animals were actually tried in the courts in France so late as 1740.

134. **fell**, cruel.

138. **rail**, scold, abuse.

139. **offend'st**, harmest.

141. **cureless**, past mending.

160, 161. **no impediment . . . estimation**, no hindrance to his receiving the consideration due to a great lawyer.

163, 164. **whose trial . . . commendation**; *whose* may refer either to *him* or to *you*: either way, the meaning is that experience of the young lawyer's skill would commend him better than any letter of introduction.

168. **take your place**, on the bench by the side of the Duke.

176. **in such rule**, in such strict accordance with legal form.

178. **within his danger**, a technical legal term, meaning within his control as having a legal claim.

181. Shylock seizes on the word *must*, which had been used by Portia without emphasis.

182. Mercy is a virtue that does not come by compulsion.

189, 190. That which belongs to the awe and majesty of kings, and on which rests the fear in which they are held by their subjects.

197. **in the course of justice**, if justice were allowed to run its course without mercy.

199. **that same prayer**, the Lord's Prayer, which Shylock, however, would not recognize.

204. **My deeds upon my head!** I will be answerable for my own actions.

206. **discharge the money**, pay the debt.

212. **malice bears down truth**, the Jew's hatred is stronger than his sense of justice or honesty.

217. **Can**, *i.e.* that can: omission of relative.

218. **a precedent.** When engaged in legal cases, lawyers often quote *precedents*, that is, *preceding* cases, cases which have been decided before, and the decisions in which they think should influence the decision in the present case. Hence one wrongful decision might be the cause of others.

221. **A Daniel**, referring to the wise judgment of Daniel in a difficult case, when a young man; recorded in one of the apocryphal books of the Bible.

228. **forfeit**, forfeited.

233. **tenour**, the terms, what is set forth.

245-247. "The penalty now due by the terms of the bond, extraordinary as it may appear, comes clearly within the meaning and purpose of the law."

249. **more elder**, double comparative.

255. **on your charge**, at your expense.

257. **nominated**, named.

259. **'T were good you do**, it would be well for you to do.

266. **still her use**, her constant practice.

272. **process**, the whole circumstances.

273. **speak me fair in death**, speak well of me when I am dead.

279. **with all my heart**; a pun. Antonio says this with an attempt to smile, in order to cheer his friend.

289. **so**, if only.

294. **stock of Barrabas**, family descendants of the robber-murderer whom the Jews preferred to Christ. (Pronounce *Barrabas* with accent on first syllable. The correct spelling is *Barabbas*.)

309. **confiscate**, past participle = *confiscated*, forfeited.

326. **in the substance**, in the gross weight.

329. If the scale turns by the weight of a hair.

342. **so**, as stated in Portia's reading of the bond.

344. **question**, argument.

350. **contrive**, plot.

352. **privy coffer**, private treasury.

353. **in the mercy**; we should say *at* the mercy.

354. **voice**, vote, decision.

356. **manifest proceeding**, clear evidence.

368. **For**, as for, concerning.

370. Submission may induce me to accept a fine, instead of insisting on your handing over the half of your goods due to the state.

371. Portia means that though the duke may accept a fine, Antonio must receive his half in full.

379. **quit**, give up. Antonio asks that Shylock may not even have to pay a fine to the state.

380. **so**, if.

381. **in use**, in trust.

385. **presently**, at once.

392. **draw a deed of gift**, draw up a document by which this gift may be legally made.

397. **ten more**, to make up twelve jurymen to find him guilty.

400. **desire your grace of pardon**, we should say, "desire pardon of your grace".

403. **serves you not**, is not at your disposal.

404. **gratify**, make some return to.

408. **in lieu whereof**, in return for which.

410. **cope**, give as an equal return.

withal, with; preposition governing *ducats*.

417. Portia has a double meaning here. She asks in the person of the lawyer that Bassanio will recognize the lawyer again; at the same time she is gleefully thinking that when next he sees her, with the disguise removed, he will not recognize the lawyer in her. She perhaps lays some stress on *you*, as she says *I pray you* to Bassanio; then she turns to Antonio and says, *I wish* YOU *well*, no doubt hoping that he will hear good news of his ships.

419. **of force**, of necessity.

attempt you further, make a further attempt to persuade you.

448. **withal**, in addition.

Act IV—Scene 2

Time—Immediately after Scene 1

5. **you are well o'erta'en**, I am glad to have overtaken you.

6. **advice**, consideration.

11. **my youth**, Nerissa. Mark how skilfully and naturally Shakespeare brings Gratiano and Nerissa together.

16. **old**, used intensively, without any special meaning, as in the schoolboy's slang phrase "old boy".

Act V—Scene 1

Time—Day after Act IV. Late at night

Notice what a pleasing effect this beautiful and poetic scene has after the tragic strain of the last act.

4. **Troilus**, son of Priam, king of Troy. His love, **Cressida**, was given to the Greeks in exchange for a Trojan prisoner. Shakespeare had in mind a line in Chaucer's poem *Troilus and Creseide*.

7. **Thisbe**, a beautiful girl of Babylon, loved by Pyramus. She arranged to meet him, and while waiting for him at the appointed place, saw a lioness, and ran away. In running, one of her garments slipped from her, which the lioness soiled with blood. Pyramus found it, and, thinking Thisbe was devoured, he killed himself, as Thisbe did when she found his dead body. Her story is told by Ovid.

10. **Dido**, queen of Carthage in N. Africa, was beloved for a time by Æneas of Troy, the founder of the Roman race, who landed at Carthage in the course of his wanderings. When he sailed away for Italy she was heart-broken, and Shakespeare (without classical authority) pictures her upon the sea-shore waving

a willow branch, the emblem of forsaken love, to induce him to return. In the account of Dido in Virgil's *Æneid*, she has herself burnt to death on a funeral pile.

11. **waft**=wafted, waved.

13. **Medea**, daughter of the king of Colchis, fell in love with Jason (see note on i. 1. 170 172), and helped him get the golden fleece. On returning home with him as his wife, she made old **Æson** his father young again by her magical arts. Her story is told by Ovid.

These fabulous old stories may have been read by Shakespeare in Ovid, the Latin poet, whose works were translated into English. But the names also occur in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, in the order in which Shakespeare introduces them.

enchanted. Herbs gathered at particular times, as at midnight or by moonlight, and in particular places, and with certain ceremonies, were supposed to have magical powers.

14–22. The beautiful night has recalled to the memory of the lovers these old-world stories, and Jessica has kept up with Lorenzo. Now he, in the same tone and the same form of words, begins playfully to talk of Jessica. She follows suit, until Lorenzo at the words *he forgave it her*, stops her with a kiss.

15. **steal**; in two senses: (1) steal away, (2) steal his precious ducats and jewels.

16. **unthrift**, unthrifty, extravagant.

19. **Stealing.** Jessica means that if she stole her father's money, Lorenzo stole her heart away.

21. **shrew**, scolding woman.

23. **I would out-night you**, I would out-do you in telling of things that happened "in such a night".

28. **Stephano.** Accent on second syllable, though the accent is usually on the first.

31. **crosses**, such as are still to be seen by the wayside in all Roman Catholic countries.

37. **ceremoniously**, with proper arrangements, such as lighting up the hall (line 89), and arranging for the playing of music (line 53).

39. Launcelot enters with his hand to his mouth, imitating the sounds of the post-horn.

46. **post**; see note on ii. 9. 99.

47. **horn.** There is a punning allusion here to the full horn as an emblem of plenty.

49. **expect**, await.

53. **music**, musical instruments, or band of musicians.

56, 57. The time and place and surroundings are suited to the sweet harmonious sounds that come at the touch of the lutists' fingers.

58–65. See how the sky is studded with stars, that shine like plates of gold. All the celestial bodies, large and small, sing like

angels as they move, constantly raising the chorus to the cherubim, who ever keep their youthful look. Immortal souls have within them this sweet music, but we mortals, covered as with a thick garment by our bodies, that spring from earth and to earth again decay, cannot hear it.

59. **patines.** The *patine* (now spelt *paten*, L. *patina*) is a small plate, usually of gold, used to cover the cup in the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church.

61. **his** = its.

Shakespeare is here referring to what is called the "music of the spheres". The earth was supposed by the ancients to be enclosed by eight spheres, on each of which stood a beautiful female form, who uttered a single note as the sphere went round, the whole eight forming perfect harmony. Lorenzo partly adopts this old idea of celestial music, and represents stars and angels as answering one another in song. So in Job xxxviii. 7, we read, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy".

62. **cherubins.** The plural of the Hebrew word *cherub* is *cherubim*, but *cherubin* was used as a singular in the Latin version of the Bible called the *Vulgate*, and so in English and French *cherubin* was regarded as singular, and a new plural *cherubins* was formed. In English we also have the plural *cherubs*.

66. **Diana**, the Roman goddess of light, represented the moon. The moon, we must understand, is now temporarily hidden behind a cloud.

70. **attentive**, sensitive.

72. **unhandled**, not broken in.

77. **make a mutual stand**, all stand still with one consent.

79. **the poet**, the Roman poet Ovid (B.C. 43–A.D. 18). He tells the story in his great poem the *Metamorphoses*, Books x and xi.

80. **Orpheus**, one of Jason's companions. He was given a lyre by the god Apollo, and played so sweetly that animals, trees, and rocks moved after him. His wife Eurydice having died, he followed her to Hades, where he so charmed the god of the infernal regions that Eurydice was allowed to follow him to earth, on condition that Orpheus would not look at her until they had reached the upper world. He had just reached the boundary when his anxiety to see if his wife were following him overcame him. He looked round; immediately Eurydice was snatched away.

81. **stockish**, lifeless like a block of wood or stone.

86, 87. The workings of his mind are slow and uninteresting, and his disposition is as gloomy as Erebus.

87. **Erebus**, the name given to the dark space beneath the earth, through which souls were supposed to pass on their way to Hades.

88. Lorenzo and Jessica are seated on the bank at one side of the stage listening to the music. Portia and Nerissa enter at the opposite side. The moon being obscured by a cloud, their presence

is not noticed by the newly married couple until Portia says *Peace, ho!*

91. **naughty**, wicked.

97. **main of waters**, ocean.

98. **music**, *i.e.* band.

99. **without respect**, without considering or comparing with other things. Just as the candle's light seems strong when seen alone, but feeble when the moon is shining, so the music in the calmness of the night sounds sweeter than it would if heard by day.

103. **attended**, listened to attentively.

107, 108. How many things act agreeably on our senses, so that we can esteem them aright and see their true excellence, because they come at a fitting time.—There is a pun on *season*.

109. **Peace, ho!** Portia raises her voice, and Lorenzo and Jessica start up from their seat on the bank.

the moon sleeps with Endymion. Endymion was a youth of such beauty that the moon-goddess, who cared for no one else, fell in love with him, and sent him into a deep sleep so that she might lie by his side and kiss him without his knowledge.

110. **would not be awaked.** The moon was now hidden behind a cloud. So Diana was represented as sleeping with Endymion, not wishing to be awaked until morning.

115. **speed**, prosper.

120. **No note**, no notice, make no remark.

121. **tucket**, set of notes on the trumpet. (Ital. *toccata*.)

127, 128. We should have daylight at the same time as the people on the other side of the world, if you would walk in our night-time, when the sun has gone to them.—Bassanio greets his wife with a pretty compliment.

129. **light.** There is a pun here.

130. **a light wife**, frivolous in conduct.

heavy, sad: another pun.

132. **God sort all!** May God dispose, arrange, all things.

136. **in all sense**, in every respect.

141. I cut short this mere word-politeness.

142. Gratiano, who entered with Bassanio and Antonio, at once went to his wife, who, instead of showing herself pleased to see him, has accused him of parting with his ring.

148. **posy**, the motto cut on the ring. So called because such mottoes were often in verse: it is the same word as *poesy*.

149. **cutler's poetry**, the doggerel engraved on knife-blades.

155, 156. **not for me, yet for . . . respective**, regardful, if not of me, yet of your strongly expressed oaths.

158. Nerissa means that he gave it to a lady.

162. **scrubbed**, short, stumpy. Note the comic effect of Gratiano's unconscious irony.

182. **That took some pains.** This is Gratiano's reason for giving the ring, or the grounds on which Nerissa begged it.

193–197. Bassanio's repetition of the words, *the ring*, shows that he is playfully trying to appease his wife's wrath.

201. If you considered how your honour was involved in keeping the ring safe.

204. **to have defended**; *to defend* would be more correct.

205. **With any terms of zeal**, *i.e.* earnestly, as if you meant it.

205, 206. **wanted . . . ceremony**? as to have been so wanting in modesty as to urge you to give up a thing held as an emblem (*ceremony*) of my love and your faithfuless?

210. **civil doctor**, doctor of civil law.

216. **enforced**, morally obliged.

217. I was troubled with a feeling of shame at seeming ungrateful in refusing so small a thing, and with a sense of what courtesy demanded of me. Note that Bassanio does not tell how he was persuaded by Antonio to send the ring.

220. **candles of the night**, the stars.

225. **enforced wrong**, wrong I could not help doing.

231. **of credit**, worthy of belief. To swear double is to swear falsely.

234. **wealth**, well-being, welfare.

235. **Which**, my body.

236. **Had miscarried**, would have come to disaster.

238. **advisedly**, deliberately.

254. **richly**, with rich cargoes.

259. **living**; see note on iii. 2. 157.

267. **manna.** See Exodus xvi.

269, 270. **you are not . . . full**, you are not fully satisfied with my story of these events.

271, 272. "In the Court of Queen's Bench, when a complaint is made against a person for a 'contempt', the practice is that before sentence is finally pronounced he is sent into the Crown Office, and being there 'charged upon interrogatories', he is made to swear that he will 'answer all things faithfully'."

APPENDIX

1. THE DATE OF THE PLAY

The date of the composition of a play of Shakespeare's is of some importance in two respects: (1) it enables us to place the play in its right chronological order among the rest; (2) it enables us to see under what influences Shakespeare wrote, and to mark a stage in the development of his power and art. There is in many cases a difficulty in determining this date, owing to the fact that very often a play was not printed until long after it was written; so that the date of its printing is not a good guide to the date of its composition. As a matter of fact, not one-half of Shakespeare's plays were printed during his lifetime, and several of those that were printed came out without his consent or knowledge. The explanation of these facts is, that Shakespeare, being an actor as well as a dramatist, had an interest in keeping his plays in manuscript. They were part of the stock-in-trade, so to speak, of the particular company of actors to which he belonged, or in whose performances he was directly interested. It was important, therefore, that they should not get into the hands of other companies, who might give representations of them, or into the hands of the public, who would perhaps not be so eager to see the performance of a play which they had previously read.

In fixing on a probable date for the composition of any play, the judgment of scholars who have studied the subject is determined by two kinds of evidence: (1) external evidence; that is, records of printing or performance, allusions in books by other authors, events which may have suggested scenes, &c.; (2) internal evidence, such as allusions in the play to past or contemporary events. A second kind of internal evidence is gained by very careful study of points which young students

cannot fully appreciate, such as minute questions of style; but there are certain obvious differences between the early and the late plays which all can see. Thus, the early plays contain many classical allusions, many instances of word-play, many riming lines, and many passages in which the sense is not run on from line to line, but where nearly every line is either a complete sentence, or clause of a sentence. The later plays contain less rime, fewer puns, fewer classical allusions, and the blank verse shows more freedom and power.

In regard to the date of the *Merchant of Venice*, the following scheme shows the external evidence, going backwards from the date of printing:—

1600. First printed, by two different printers, James Roberts and Thomas Heyes.

1598. Entered on the Stationers' Register by James Roberts, who was, however, forbidden to print it until licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, among whose company of players Shakespeare then was.

1598. Mentioned in a list of Shakespeare's plays in *Palladis Tamia*, or *Wit's Treasury*, a little book containing comparisons of English with classical authors, by Francis Meres.

1594. Philip Henslowe, a theatrical manager (who spelt very badly), mentions in his diary a play called *The Venesyon comodey*, which may be Shakespeare's play. Shakespeare's company was certainly acting at Henslowe's theatre in this year.

From this it appears that the play was not composed later than 1598, and may have been composed in 1594 or even earlier.

The internal evidence shows that while the play exhibits many of the characteristics of early plays, yet it has also points of likeness to the later plays. For instance, the puns, rimes, and classical allusions are numerous, which is a mark of early work; while the lofty thought, the admirable blank verse, and the vivid character-painting are marks of maturity.

On the whole, it is thought that the *Merchant of Venice* was composed about 1596, and in part rewritten before it was printed in 1600.

2. THE SOURCES OF THE PLOT

Shakespeare seldom invented his plots. He usually took some story which he had heard or read, or which he had seen represented on the stage, and made that the foundation of his wonderful work as we now know it. The sources from which he is believed to have obtained the stories of the *Merchant of Venice* are as follows:—

(1) An old play called *The Iew and Ptolome*, in which two stories showing "the greedinesse of worldly chusers and bloody mindes of usurers" are combined.

(2) The *Adventures of Giannetto*, from a collection of tales called *Il Pecorone*, by Giovanni Fiorentino, published at Milan in 1558. This gave Shakespeare the story of the bond, the name of Portia's house, the plan which Portia invented for freeing the merchant, and the incident of the ring in the fifth act.

(3) A translation of the *Gesta Romanorum*, which gave the story of the caskets.

(4) The *Ballad of Gernutus*, an old poem from which Shakespeare perhaps got the incident of Shylock's whetting the knife.

(5) Silvayn's *Orator*, in which is an argument about a Jew "who would for his debt have a pound of the flesh of a Christian".

3. THE CHIEF CHARACTERS.

Shylock was 'old' at the time of the events which made him famous. We know a good deal of his history. He had wandered, in the way of his trade, as far north as Frankfort, but settled at Venice, whose laws, liberal as times went towards aliens, enabled him to follow his business securely. He had only one child, a daughter, called Jessica; his wife, Leah, must have died soon after the child's birth, for, while Shylock remembered her fondly, and treasured a ring she had given him when he was a bachelor, Jessica never speaks in a way that suggests she had known her mother. Jessica kept house for her father with the help of a single servant, in a style—forced on her by Shylock—of the severest simplicity.

By trade he was a 'usurer', that is, he lent money out at interest. He had acquired great wealth, partly by knowledge of his business and of the commercial position of those with

whom he dealt, partly — as his enemies asserted — by taking advantage of his clients' weaknesses, and mercilessly 'selling them up' if they were unpunctual in payment. Devoted as he was to money-making, his race and his religion occupied quite as much of his thoughts. The Jews in Shakespeare's Venice were allowed a synagogue to worship in; they were obliged to wear a distinctive dress, and, no doubt, lived (both by their own choice and by compulsion) in a quarter of their own. They were granted unusual privileges before the law: the Duke himself went in pursuit of Lorenzo and Jessica at Shylock's bidding, and it was again the Duke in full court who would not wrest the law against the foreigner. But in matters of ordinary intercourse they had to endure, even at the hands of the noblest among the Christians, the bitterest contempt and most intolerable personal insult. To this Shylock replied with a hatred all the fiercer for being concealed, and with an exclusiveness all the haughtier that he found himself despised by men whom he regarded as his inferiors in religion and in race. Shylock regarded his nation as 'sacred', and greatly esteemed his tribe; in imagination he was constantly back in Palestine, with the folk of his sacred Scriptures. He quotes Jacob, whose 'wise mother' gave him his position among the patriarchs, as an example of heaven-prospered trading; his servant he thinks of as the offspring of Hagar; pork reminds him of the conjuring of the prophet of Nazareth; in his enemy he sees a resemblance to the 'publicans' who had vexed the souls of his countrymen sixteen centuries before; his very oaths ("by Jacob's staff", "by our holy Sabbath", "cursed be my tribe") speak of his people and his faith.

How ought we to feel towards Shylock? The vast difference of opinion on the point is reflected in the diverse interpretations of the character which have held the stage. In the 18th century Macklin laid stress upon his 'snarling malignity', and presented a frightful figure of devilish cunning and hatred—a combination of mere miser and murderer—which is described as follows by a spectator:—"The first words which he utters are spoken slowly and deliberately: 'Three thousand ducats'. The *th* and *s* twice occurring, and the last *s* after the *t* have a lickerish sound from Macklin's lips, as if he were tasting the ducats and all that they can buy; this speech creates for the man, upon his first

appearance, a prepossession which is sustained throughout. Three such words, thus spoken, and at the very first, reveal a whole character. In the scene in which he first misses his daughter he appears hatless, with hair all flying, some of it standing up straight, a hand's-breadth high, just as if it had been lifted up by a breeze from the gallows. Both hands are doubled up, and his gestures are quick and convulsive. To see a man thus moved, who had been hitherto a calm determined villain, is fearful."

On the other hand, in the 19th century, Kean and Irving have followed out that view of his character which is summed up in Hazlitt's fine phrase: "He seems the depositary of the vengeance of his race". This view, extended so far as to make Shylock a martyr, has been wonderfully expressed by Heine (a Jew himself) in a superb criticism of the play. A few sentences from it are given here. (Heine is visiting Venice.) "I looked round everywhere on the Rialto to see if I could find Shylock. I found him nowhere on the Rialto, and I determined to seek my old acquaintance in the synagogue. The Jews were just then celebrating their Day of Atonement, and they stood enveloped in their white talars, with uncanny motions of the head, looking almost like an assemblage of ghosts. There the poor Jews had stood, fasting and praying from earliest morning; since the evening before, they had taken neither food nor drink. Although I looked all round the synagogue, I nowhere discovered the face of Shylock. But towards evening, when, according to the Jewish faith, the gates of heaven are shut, and no prayer can then obtain admittance, I heard a voice, with a ripple of tears that were never wept by eyes. It was a sob that could come only from a breast that held in it all the martyrdom which, for eighteen centuries, had been borne by a whole tortured people. It was the death-rattle of a soul sinking down dead-tired at heaven's gates. And I seemed to know the voice, and I felt that I had heard it long ago, when in utter despair it moaned out, then as now, 'Jessica, my girl!'"

Thus actors and critics differ as to the proportion in which hatred and pity and fear should be blended in our feelings towards Shylock. One error we must guard against from the first, that, namely, of supposing that Shakespeare meant either to attack or to defend the Jews as a nation in the person of Shylock. Writing

'with a purpose', in this narrow sense, is not in his spirit. A Jew came into the story, and Shakespeare has taken care that we should understand both him and those with whom he dealt. With modern Englishmen, among whom Jews take a foremost place for public spirit and generosity, the difficulty is not so much to be fair to Shylock as to conceive the feelings with which Antonio regarded him.

To do so we must follow carefully the indications which Shakespeare gives us. Shylock was hated for four main reasons: his pride of race, his religious opinions, his mean and shabby habit of life, and his way of doing business.

1. As regards the first point, it is clear that the refusal of Jews in the middle ages to eat and drink with Christians, and their abhorrence of intermarriage with them, were not only bitterly resented, but further laid Jews open to horrible suspicions. The ghastly legend of St. Hugh of Lincoln was spread in various forms all over Europe, and in some parts is still believed. And even where the hatred for a people who kept so strictly apart did not take so hideous a shape, it appears in the not unnatural belief that Jews were an unkind and uncharitable race, who did not consider themselves bound by the same obligations of honour and good feeling towards Gentiles as towards one another.

2. A very similar opinion arose in matters of religion. In days when the story of the New Testament was chiefly known to people through miracle plays, the fact that St. Paul and St. John, and the founder of Christianity himself, had been Jews, became forgotten or overlooked. Even to those who could and did read their Bibles, the language of the Fourth Gospel, in which 'the Jews' are constantly mentioned in opposition to Christ (see St. John v. 15; vi. 41, &c.), might easily be misunderstood. Continual dwelling on the story of the Crucifixion, without reference to the rest of Jewish history, led to a belief that the Jews were an exceptionally unfeeling and cruel race, and their supposed hardness of heart passed into a proverb. So that Antonio looks upon a piece of seeming kindness on Shylock's part as a sign that he may yet 'turn Christian'. Conversely, the Jewish refusal of Christianity was regarded not as intellectual negation, but as a piece of the stiff-necked perversity with which their own prophets had charged them. It must also be remembered that religious intolerance was, in "the ages of conflict", almost

universal, and was displayed by the Jews themselves on a great scale during that short period of their history when they had the power of the sword over aliens in race and religion. Some of the beliefs and rights of mediæval Christianity appeared to Jews to be idolatrous and blasphemous, and towards them it was lawful and right in their eyes to feel a 'lodged hate' and 'a loathing'.

3. The wide-spread belief that Jews were miserly and squalid in their mode of life arose, no doubt, mainly from the fact that for many centuries it was as much as their lives were worth to give signs of superfluous wealth.

4. We cannot understand this ground of hatred against Shylock without remembering that both Jews and Christians were forbidden by their ecclesiastical law to take interest on money from those of their own faith. But Jews might take it from 'the stranger' (Deut. xxiii. 20), and so it came about that when commerce increased and loans began to be an essential part of its machinery, Jews naturally assumed the position of money-lenders. This consequence was hastened by the very persecutions to which they were subject. The cruel laws which in many places forbade their plying any trade or profession recognized among Christians drove them to usury. The necessity for having their property in such a shape that it could be easily 'lifted' in case of expulsion or attack, forced them to accumulate wealth in the form of gold and precious stones. Practice quickly made them experts at the financier's trade, and from their very position as aliens they were able to make that distinction between monetary and amicable relations without which extended commerce, as we know it now, is impossible. But the necessity for the trade did not make it popular, and the laws against usurers, by increasing the lender's risk, kept up the rate of interest, and aggravated the evil.

Shylock was thus one of a body who in religion and in society kept themselves aloof in repulsive isolation, who not only declined but abhorred the religious beliefs of their neighbours, and who, while taught by persecution not to show signs of wealth, were at the same time accumulating precious metals, and obtaining a great hold over individual Christians by their system of loans.

In all this we see abundant explanation of such a feeling as is expressed in its most extravagant form in Marlowe's *Jew of*

Malta. The humanity with which Shakespeare draws the portraiture of Shylock is therefore all the more striking. The Jew's hatred for Antonio is not represented as mere 'motiveless malignity', but as the result of injured patriotism, of commercial jealousy, and of resentment aroused by repeated personal insults.

He speaks with tenderness of a relic of his dead wife. It is not hinted that he used any further unkindness towards his daughter and his servant than to make their life extremely bleak and dull; to Jessica his tone is not harsh, and he trusts her—though with some misgivings—with all his keys. His fury over her robbery and desertion of him for the sake of a Christian lover is very comprehensible, and the frightful savagery with which it is expressed cannot fairly be taken literally, any more than Bassanio's willingness to offer Portia in sacrifice to save Antonio. Shylock's last reference to Jessica shows fatherly feeling, and in Launcelot he recognizes kindness with appreciation.

His great appeal to human nature is irresistible, though he fails to see its application to his own religious and racial exclusiveness.

In summary, Shylock is a miser, but a miser possessing great strength of resolution and high powers of intellect. His main fault is not a want of feeling, but a misapplication of it. So far is he from being of an insensible, flinty character, that he rather appears excessively passionate and irritable. His cruelty is not that of a cold heart, but the more terrible cruelty of perverted and outraged sensitiveness. It comes nearer the rage of Othello than the malice of Iago. And even at his worst, when every other feeling has been absorbed in the one longing to feel his knife in his enemy's heart, even then the concentration of his purpose, the clear force of his understanding, make him a figure terrible indeed, but not despicable.

But his spirit bends at last, and the tale ends without a tragedy. To think of his fate as hopelessly miserable is to force modern notions into our reading. We must remember that to Shakespeare's audiences, conversion, even though compulsory, would mean the possibility of salvation for Shylock. Since adherence to Judaism was thought to rest not on spiritual conviction but on obstinate temper, Shylock's becoming a Christian would be regarded as a recovery from sullenness. The remission of half his goods would appear generous. The absorption of so

formidable an alien into the body of the community, the marriage of his daughter to a Venetian, and the ultimate diffusion of his wealth among those willing to make a cheerful use of it, would—in those days—seem the happiest solution possible of the difficulties and dangers raised by his existence.

Portia, at the opening of the story, appears without father or mother, or indeed any relative nearer than her cousin, the famous jurisconsult of Padua, Doctor Bellario. Of her mother we hear not a word; it seems she must have died in Portia's infancy. Her father, a wealthy Italian noble, Lord of Belmont, had educated his only child with the utmost care, to speak Latin and French as well as Italian, to understand law, and to manage the affairs of a great property. He lived long enough to see her of a marriageable age, and to notice the passionate admiration roused in men of every kind by her high spirit, brilliant wit, and 'beauty like the sun', placed as these qualities were, in circumstances hardly less romantic and splendid than those of a princess of fairyland. But, before a marriage could be arranged, he was seized with mortal sickness. On his death-bed he willed that his daughter's hand should under restriction severe enough to keep away mere adventurers—be won by a 'lottery'. This 'lottery', in so far as it was matter of chance, would be—so it was thought in those days—under the ruling of Providence, and so far as it was matter of choice, would be such as to test the insight and sincerity of her lovers.

Thus was Portia, hardly yet out of her girlhood, left heiress of Belmont. The fame of her person and character, her wealth, and the hazard by which she was to be won, drew suitors from many lands. She watched them come with amusement, and with keenest penetration, for she knew the points of a man. But she was loyal to her father's will, and to the oath which she had taken to fulfil it. Her loyalty was proof even against her own feeling that she had already seen, in a young Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, of gentle blood but no estate, the man to whom she could give the whole of herself.

This decisive sense of honour was blended in Portia with a trained intelligence and a sense of humour. It is this union of qualities which marks her action throughout. It enables her to see quite straight at moments of crisis, as when Antonio's

letter comes on the eve of her marriage. By virtue of it she discerns in an instant a *cul-de-sac* from a path, and loses no time by trying impracticable ways. Her wit is equal to a thousand shifts, but her practised reason and her sound feeling show her the only right one. The end once in view, she adjusts the means to it, and sets all in motion with a quickness and a swing and a lightness of touch that stamp her an artist in action. Her alacrity is beforehand with danger, and she beats difficulty by power of combination. To her husband she gives herself with a generous completeness which, in one so clear-sighted, makes her words after Bassanio's choice the most moving thing of the kind in literature. Her solution of the problem of the bond, by a bold reduction to the absurd, is of a piece with that perfect *clearness* of character which appears in Portia sometimes as wit and grace, sometimes as courage, sometimes as penetrating insight.

This extreme *directness* in thought and action gives to Portia an almost formidable air, not diminished by the trained skill with which she approaches the discussion of an abstract principle. In these respects she is unlike many others of Shakespeare's women. It needs all her wisdom to keep her wit within bounds, and she is sometimes too unmerciful to affectation (whether in a Prince of Arragon or in one of her own pages) to be perfectly courteous. But the warmth and openness of her heart, and an extreme generosity of feeling, kindle her amazing cleverness into tact, and make her great gifts available for the ordinary offices of life. Again and again she relieves embarrassment and meets a difficult moment with a grace so perfect as to show, besides dexterity, true goodness of nature (*e.g.* in her words to the Prince of Morocco when he makes apology for his complexion; or to Bassanio when, by a stinging pun, she draws attention from her own generosity in despatching him at once to the help of Antonio). Thus, although she could preach eloquently, and argue most forcibly, she knows that sermons and arguments are comparatively futile. Though from many indications we see she was sincerely religious, she would not be content with *only* praying when she could work as well (compare v. 1. 31, with iii. 4. 30 to the end of the scene). And her delightful sense of humour saves her from any touch of self-conceit. Her spirit of comradeship and friendliness keeps her always human and kindly.

No analysis can explain the charm and power of a character like Portia's. We can perhaps best realize our feeling about her by the assurance we have that she would do nobly always, but that the full greatness of her qualities could only be shown in some crisis needing prompt and courageous action. She had, indeed, along with all womanly virtues, a larger share than most women have of some qualities commonly considered masculine, which ought perhaps to be regarded as the common property of women and men:—the power to see all round a point of abstract theory, and the will to take and keep a direct line in practice. We feel certain that were Bassanio called away to the wars, and Belmont besieged by his enemy, Portia could with undismayed cheerfulness hold his house for him, command his men, keep them in heart with jests more humorous than Launcelot's, see that her children were in due order and attentive to their studies, and yet, all the while, have time to discomfit her domestic chaplain in quiet hours of chess and theology.

Bassanio.—Bassanio's character is to be judged less from what he himself says or does than from the reflected picture which we get of him in the words and actions of other people. The two main points we know about him are that he is Antonio's chosen friend and Portia's chosen lover. Antonio—who knew all Venice—only loves the world for Bassanio's sake; and for him Portia, courted by all nations and languages, would be trebled twenty times herself. Nerissa lets us know that he is a scholar and a soldier, and that "he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady". Gratiano 'must' travel with him, even at the cost of a more subdued behaviour. And Launcelot Gobbo, who was too lively a lad not to be an excellent judge of a man when he saw one, thinks his fortune is made when he gets into his service, poor though Bassanio was. When he appears in company, other folks pay him a kind of deference which is all the more striking that it seems unconscious, and has no possible motive but to express natural feeling. Thus, even by his familiar friends he is addressed as 'My Lord Bassanio', 'Signior Bassanio'. He becomes, without effort, the centre of any group in which he finds himself. The secret of his power is also the explanation of

the comparatively small show which his actual words and deeds make in a representation of the play—for of all qualities his are the least imitable by an actor. These qualities are simplicity, directness, and courage, combined with a perfect ease and kindliness of bearing and manner. Heavily in debt, he takes neither of the two easy alternatives for the poor man,—an impracticable stiffness, or a conscious humility, but borrows from his rich friend and wooes his wealthy mistress with such a natural and manly frankness as endears him further to them both. The enigma of the three caskets he solves because he 'rightly loves', and will hazard all to win. He has the gift, by nature and breeding, of doing and saying the right thing at the right time, the tact that is founded upon good sense and a kind heart. There is a fund of quiet masterfulness in his manner of giving orders: "You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging." With what fine discretion he guides his words in checking the excitable Gratiano! How plainly his firmer will and clearer sense come out in contrast with that volatile but otherwise delightful character! The effect of the splendid simplicity of his qualities is heightened by the external magnificence of the rivals to whom he is preferred. Some have questioned Portia's insight, and maintained that she 'threw herself away' on Bassanio. But indeed she, like the rest of the world, might have said to him much what Kent said to Lear, "You have that in your countenance which I would fain call master". "What's that?" "Authority." It is just this 'authority', or unconscious control, which, in a man, is the supreme quality. Oliver Wendell Holmes says, in speaking of a similar choice: "It takes a very *true* man to be a fitting companion for a woman of genius, but not a very great one. I am not sure that she will not embroider her ideal better on a plain ground than on one with a brilliant pattern already worked in its texture. But as the very essence of genius is truthfulness, contact with realities (which are always ideas behind shows of form or language), nothing is so contemptible as falsehood and pretence in its eyes. Now, it is not easy to find a perfectly true woman, and it is very hard to find a perfectly true man. And a woman of genius, who has the

sagacity to choose such a one as her companion, shows more of the divine gift in so doing than in her finest talk or her most brilliant work of letters or of art" (from chapter xii of *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table*).

Antonio was one of the chief men of that great Mediterranean city, 'whose merchants were princes, whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth'. Now and again in the course of the play an odd term or phrase brings back the very look and colour of that old Venetian trading: 'argosies' that 'richly come to harbour suddenly': 'pirates' and 'land-thieves', 'many a purchased slave', 'silks' and 'spices', a 'turquoise' and a 'diamond' that 'cost two thousand ducats', 'a beauteous scarf veiling an Indian beauty', 'parrots' of 'commendable discourse', and 'a wilderness of monkeys'. This last has a touch as of Sinbad himself in it, and, throughout, the commerce is not confined or sedentary; there is a whole volume of 'voyages' in the very names of the places from which Antonio's tall ships carry their rich lading—

> "From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
> From Lisbon, Barbary, and India".

The brisk movement of the piece appears in the medley of nations that find their way to Belmont—Neapolitan, Frenchman, Saxon, Spaniard, Englishman, and Moor. It has been objected to Bassanio that he makes love in the spirit of a trader, but it would be less misleading to say that Antonio trades in the spirit of a lover, like Jason and his Argonauts.

Magnanimity, indeed, is the inmost quality of the 'royal' merchant. He lives to do great kindnesses greatly,

> "the kindest man,
> The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
> In doing courtesies, and one in whom
> The ancient Roman honour more appears
> Than any that draws breath in Italy".

He associates by preference, not with merchants, but with a soldier and a scholar like Bassanio, and his friends Lorenzo and Gratiano. He is well known at court. The Duke and 'the magnificoes of greatest port' are interested in his welfare. Consistently with this, he seems not to be greatly concerned

with his merchandise except as the material of his bounty; he spends large sums in relieving poor debtors from difficulty; and he plainly says no more than the truth in telling Bassanio that to question the heartiness of his affection would hurt him more than to waste the whole of his fortune.

His spirit is serious and grave, subject to fits of melancholy, full of sensibility and tenderness. He is content to enjoy life through his friend. He 'embraces' heaviness, and tears come readily to his eyes. So full of anxious kindness is his manner that his enemy can describe him as 'fawning'. It is characteristic of him that he is sincerely resigned at the near prospect of dying; constitutional diffidence, perhaps physical weakness, make him feel that he is 'a tainted wether of the flock, meetest for death', one of 'the weakest kind of fruit'. He rather discourages the attempts of his friends to save him, and is satisfied to think that Bassanio will live still and write his epitaph. It is in keeping with his quiet temperament that he should put aside, almost angrily, the notion of his being in love. He is a bachelor 'predestinate', and when we lose sight of him at Belmont it is with a feeling that his main interest for the future will be the duties of a godfather.

It shocks us to find Antonio treating Shylock with gross personal discourtesy. Nothing indeed could have expressed so vividly the feeling of the time towards a Jewish usurer, as insult and violence from the stately and amiable Antonio. The historical explanation of this feeling has already been suggested.

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